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Introduction

The relationship between British Columbia schools and the society they serve is complex and can be viewed in a number of ways. As one of society's most instrumental social and educational institutions, the school reflects a society's aspirations, its history, its culture, and the values it holds.

Since the establishment of the common school in the mid-nineteenth century, the character of British Columbia schooling has been shaped by a variety of factors, including historical developments, provincial geography and topography, the economic cycles of a frontier region, and the province's social composition. In addition to such longstanding influences, the character of provincial schools in recent decades has also been shaped by other factors, most notably changes in the family unit, changes in the role and status of women, shifting patterns of employment and immigration, and the advent of new technologies.

The following eight research papers were commissioned at the request of Barry M. Sullivan, British Columbia Royal Commissioner on Education, to assist the Commissioner in his 1987-1988 study of provincial schools. Each of these papers attempts to survey an issue or area of importance to the Royal Commission and to bring some measure of understanding to the long-term and recent social forces that have shaped and continue to shape the character of provincial schools and the context in which they operate.

Included in this collection are the following papers: "The Purpose of Schooling"; "Multiculturalism"; "Rural Inequality"; "The Changing Character of Society and Implications for Schooling", "Citizenship and Community"; "Politics in Education"; "Public Support for Non-Public Schooling"; and "French Immersion in British Columbia, 1988-2000."

In undertaking these researches, we were helped greatly by the research and thinking of many of our colleagues in social, educational, and administrative studies at Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Victoria, particularly, Laura Aikens, Jean Barman, Jörgen Dahlie, John Dennison, Donald Fisher, Yvonne Martin-Newcombe, and Neil Sutherland. Special thanks is also due to Richard Inglis of the Provincial Museum for his assistance in the historical aspects of this study.

We would also like to thank school district personnel and educational consultants throughout the province who so willingly shared with us their understandings of schools today. In this regard, a special note of thanks is extended to Chuck Curteis of School District #36 in Surrey for his help in educating two historians to the world of statistics, as well as to Susan Hunter and Lloyd McDonald.

Our appreciation is also due to the staff of Statistics Canada, the British Columbia Ministry of Education, the British Columbia Ministry of Social Services and Housing who supplied helpful figures and forecasts. The Provincial Archives of British Columbia made available reference collections of historical materials, as did the libraries of the three provincial universities and scholars from their respective Faculties of Education. A particular note of thanks is likewise due to Professor Sylvain Lourie at the UNESCO Division of Educational Planning in Paris, to Professor Michael Kirst and Professor Henry Levin of Stanford University, California, and to Professor Mark Holmes at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, for their help in providing us with national and international perspectives.

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British Columbia Schools and Society

1. The Purpose of Schooling

During the inquiry, interested British Columbians from all walks of life expressed what they believed to be the important purposes of their schools. Understandably, parents thought first of their own children. They wanted schools to teach them useful things, help them distinguish right from wrong, enlighten them on their cultural origins, encourage them to get along with others, and fit them for a job. Beyond these matters, parents and others often linked the purposes of schooling with provincial prosperity or social cohesion. Indeed, these two sometimes-conflicting themes—what schools can do for individuals and what they can do for whole populations—competed for attention throughout the inquiry.

Historical Perceptions of Schooling

Schooling as a principal road to personal maturity is a belief long recognized in British Columbia. For example, despite initial arguments over the place of religion in public schools, schooling endured from earliest times as a moral enterprise. The 1865 *Free School Act*, to illustrate, stressed morality and character. The *Common School Ordinance* of 1869 declared the "good character" of teachers crucial to the development of morality in children. And the 1872 *Public School Act* enjoined teachers to maintain order and discipline, sentiments echoed in such current legislation as that requiring teachers to "maintain care that games are honourably played and activities conducted in a suitable manner." Concepts of childhood have undergone changes over the years, as have disciplinary measures intended to govern a child's moral growth. Be that as it may, the language of our school legislation retained a certain severity; the *School Act* of 1958 employed words like character, offence, punishment, pardon, obedient, diligent, vice, misconduct, honour, loyalty, respect, conduct, and reform, over a wide range of its provisions. Besides morality, other attributes of personal maturity such as the three Rs, good health, artistic appreciation, and manual skills also appear deeply rooted in our province's educational past.

In rural British Columbia a century ago, one-room elementary schools emphasized predictably few fundamental studies. But early urban schools, and urban high schools in particular, offered what one scholar[1] called a "somewhat pretentious curriculum" embracing English, arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, mensuration, Latin, statics, English and Roman history, bookkeeping, music, dictation, and geography, with such options as trigonometry, hydrostatics, French, Greek and Greek history, botany, zoology, astronomy, rhetoric, geology, chemistry, and others. Subjects like these served the few students contemplating university work; for that purpose, at least, the subjects were useful. However, as British Columbians called for a closer fit between their schools and the workplace, commercial studies, manual training, technical courses, home economics, agriculture, and physical education laid hold of the curriculum with a sure grip.

Just as schools have been seen as serving individual needs over the past century or more, they have also been perceived as instruments of widespread social and economic stabilization. As a specialist on the question[2] has indicated, historical expressions of the social purpose of schooling in British Columbia have proved both varied and dramatic. Doubtless the best known if least specific of these is the expectation that the central purpose of schooling is the development of good citizenship, a notion appealing to early-century progressives and one that still finds a ready audience.

Other observations on the topic seem more forceful. In 1925, Education Commissioners J.H. Putman and G.M. Weir saw compulsory high school attendance as the "best insurance against anarchy and bolshevism" and a big step toward the "self-preservation" of society. Along the same lines, social reformers believed school attendance would help strengthen child labour laws and protect otherwise vulnerable children. By the same token, in two ways schools were considered the locus of preparation for industrial work, the backbone of provincial well-being. For one thing, they taught the fundamentals of literacy and calculation required by industry. For another, they trained children in responsibility, punctuality, reliability, honesty, and hard work, all marketable qualities among entrepreneurs. Schools have been seen as serving many other social and economic purposes as well. School promoters consistently assumed that schools could reduce crime, improve public health, inspire patriotism, foster community pride, minimize civic strife, eradicate prejudice, preserve culture, acquaint children with recognized forms of earning, saving, investing, and spending, and in the long run even contribute to international understanding and world peace.

That these and similar purposes of schooling should today strike such a familiar chord testifies to the profound faith British Columbians have historically placed in their schools as the means of both individual fulfillment and general welfare. These schools trained provincial leaders. They nurtured the less prominent. And by providing a hospitable for boys and girls, the best of them helped the province to withstand the gnawing hardships of early settlement, isolation, unforgiving weather, family displacement, and economic depression. Until, perhaps, the postwar period of the 1950s, schools adapted gradually to changing conditions as these gradually altered the lives of all British Columbians. Whether to urbanization, resource industry, mass media, or distant travel, adaptation was incremental. By contrast, developments of the past few decades constitute quantum leaps forward that have rendered very difficult the schools' attempts to make up the ground.

Societal Changes

These radical changes in the way we live have assumed many forms and are too numerous for comprehensive elaboration here. A few, intimately connected with the purpose of schooling, may serve, however, to emphasize their impact on the school as social as well as tutorial institution.

Family structure, for example, has altered vividly. Between 1969 and 1982, total divorce rates in Canada rose from 1,370 to 3,655 per 10,000 marriages.[3] British Columbian manifestation of this trend is striking. Between 1971 and 1981, single-parent families outgrew two-parent families by 49% as opposed to 22%. Over the same period, the single-parent family component of all families rose from 12% to 17%. An expert in the history of Canadian childhood[4] points out that altered family structure in itself need not place a child at risk, and that single parents traditionally endeavour "to ensure that their youngsters participate as fully as others" in supervised activities and school work. His observation that low income parents can afford neither "the sort of day care that provides the optimum environment..., the fees and equipment...of the more expensive sports,...[nor] the extensive transportation networks these activities so often demand" serves, though, as a reminder of the financial straits of many single parents. In B.C., 82% of single-parent families are headed by women. In 1980, some 30% of these claimed social assistance, compared with 8.5% of two-parent families. Moreover, 62% of children of single mothers live below the poverty line.

Closely related to changes in family structure are corresponding changes in the status of women in our society. Owing to manpower shortages in World War II, women assumed work force roles in many war and service industries and occupations. Participation, though, was relatively underpaid and for the duration only. Nor, for that matter, did subsequent attempts to establish full partnership in Canada's work force secure for women an equitable share of traditional male occupations. In fact, Statistics Canada points to categories of jobs that remain to this day female-dominated—secretaries, bookkeepers, salespeople, cashiers, nurses, kindergarten and elementary school teachers, administration support personnel, and janitors, among others. Particular occupations—secondary school teaching, for example—draw arresting attention to disparities. In 1985-86, the number of male and female teachers in B.C. stood at 9 305 and 10,821 respectively; figures for male and female vice-principals stood at 550 and 85; for male and female principals at 1,209 and 168; and for male and female department heads at 1,226 and 355.

Data such as these prompted the Macdonald Commission to express concern over school counselling services which continue to steer high-school girls into traditional female occupations, and to speculate that by absenting themselves

from computer training, women might involuntarily contribute to a male technological élite. These considerations notwithstanding, signs indicate the steady growth of feminist influence in Canadian life. Between 1961 and 1971, the national percentage of women in the work force increased from 27% to 40%. In 1985, 54.5% of married British Columbia women had entered the labour force. According to recent census data, women are rapidly increasing their numbers as architects, engineers, chemists, economists, lawyers, doctors, dentists, bus drivers, mechanics, furniture-makers, pharmacists, carpenters, and police officers, all traditionally male-dominated forms of employment. Meanwhile, the strength of the feminist movement (as reflected in the professional literature; anti-harassment policies; political activism; entry into post-secondary institutions; powerful lobbying on day care, sexual abuse, and abortion; and growing visibility in key posts within government, industry, business, education, and the arts) characterizes the heightening status of women as a major contemporary trend.

As family structures have changed, and both within those structures and in society at large the role of women has altered, so too has the multicultural nature of British Columbia assumed a somewhat different pattern. In 1979, a prominent Canadian geographer[5] could write that "the overall ethnic mix of the population of British Columbia has changed relatively little since the turn of the twentieth century." Drawing upon 1971 census figures, he showed a province that was 59% of British origin, 8.1% German, and 4.4% French, with Netherlander, Ukrainian, Italian, Norwegian, Native Indian, Chinese, Swedish, Polish, Russian, Danish, and East Indian populations ranging downward from 3.3% to 0.9%. As he wrote, however, shifts were in process. During 1968, 44% of the immigrants to the Province were from Europe followed by Asia at 22% and the USA at 21%. By 1986, the major source was Asia at 57% followed by Europe at 17% and the USA at 10%. Immigrants from the same source tended to favour particular locations. Thus, in 1986, among all who indicated Vancouver as the city of intended destination, 61% came from Hong Kong, India, and the rest of Asia. For Victoria, the figure was 44.1%.

Of statistics such as these there is no short supply. But as a distinguished writer in the field[6] reminds us, the important meaning is that we have "witnessed explosive growth in immigration, rediscovery of ethnicity, and the acknowledgement of pluralism as a salient characteristic of society." There was a time, he notes, when British Columbians believed immigrants "would be assimilated by the dominant culture of the host society...." Today, it is more generally accepted that others' value systems are unique and deserving of respect. The danger lurks only at the extremes—with a cultural majority wishing "to homogenize culture to some absolute set of norms" and a minority whose artificial efforts to "reconstruct their past denies the dynamic nature of culture."

Because scenic splendour and resource economies go hand in hand in the Pacific Northwest, it is small wonder that British Columbia continues to attract enterprising settlement. Since early times, and in spite of fluctuations, its forestry, agriculture, fishing, energy, manufacturing, recreation, transportation, and communication industries have come to be depended on as guarantors of the good life. On this subject, though, the evidence appears ambivalent. Between 1976 and 1985, the province's gross domestic product increased from 22,647 to 53,275 million dollars although its percentage change decelerated from 18.9 to a low of 2.9 in 1982, climbing once more to an estimated 6.6 in 1985. Over the same period, however, the unemployment percentage rate dipped from 8.6 to a low of 6.7 in 1981, rising again to 14.7 in 1984 and settling to 14.2 in 1985. Nevertheless, gradual recovery from the recession of the early 1980s and the return to a prosperous "normalcy" remains the expectation, or at least the hope, of many British Columbians. That such is too comfortable a vision is presently argued on the national scene by such organizations as Employment and Immigration Canada, the Economic Council of Canada, and the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Employment and Immigration predicts modest economic and employment growth to 1995 but indicates several attendant changes. One is that the "services-producing sector is expected to contribute over 60 per cent of Canadian output growth" and "account for about three quarters of all new jobs...." Another is that new technology demands "a new type of maintenance and repair technician" trained in electronics, mechanics, and electricity and possessing "good diagnostic capabilities." Yet another is that in the 1990s Canadian industry will encounter unprecedented competition characterized by "increased market segmentation and rapidly changing technological developments," stressing "productivity gains, flexibility in output and quality products" and "steering business into specialization and niche marketing."

The Economic Council of Canada advises that computer-based technology is expected to increase the total number of jobs up to 1995 but warns that the "impacts of technological change are uneven and disruptive." Machining, clerical, materials-handling, equipment-operating, and crafts occupations are predicted to experience net job losses. A num-

ber of fields in the private sector—trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and business service—will continue to require substantial clerical assistance, but the fact that clerical work will be progressively computerized is unlikely to ameliorate the ghettoization of women performing clerical tasks. Reduction of such negative effects accordingly lies in retraining in order that "the growth potential of the new technologies can more than offset their employment displacement effects." Not unrelated is the observation by a third body—the Institute for Research on Public Policy—that precisely at the time the nation's economy is to depend for its resilience upon innovation and initiative, "the decline in the relative number of young labour market entrants could lead to a labour force that is less flexible and mobile from a geographical, occupational and industrial perspective." No stranger to high technology in manufacturing, transportation, communication, and resource exploitation, British Columbia cannot afford to ignore the implications for its economic future of these Canada-wide forecasts.

Implications for Schools

It is in the context of these significant changes in family structure, assumptions surrounding the roles of women, the realities of multiculturalism, and the province's economic horizons that the inquiry into the purposes of schooling took place. Many parents gave the impression that they sensed life would somehow be different in years to come and wanted to do the best they could to ensure prosperity for their children in that brave new world. Perhaps fewer alluded directly to changes and urged particular note of them. But everyone saw in the school an agent of paramount importance either for enhancing individual lives or for promoting the commonweal. And since purpose is a somewhat abstract term, most people who addressed the question seemed to assume that purpose might best be deduced from what schooling empowers children or provinces or countries to do.

Those who viewed schooling predominantly as serving the needs of children appeared to share much common ground with respect to empowerment. Good schooling, they implied, enables children to express their understandings and innermost feelings; to ask imaginative questions; to discriminate wisely among choices; to acquire a sense of the consequences of action; to know their culture and that of others; to enjoy their own and others' sensibilities; to practise the arts; to make their way in the present world; and, as an act of self-respect, to contribute to the wider social, economic, and spiritual good. To these desirable but very general references to empowerment were added others sensitive to a changing world. An example is that tomorrow's schools must show all children how to create, organize, tap, and bring to bear exponentially expanding data reserves in aid of their own intellectual growth and, ultimately, in support of humanitarian causes. Another is that schools ought not only to show children how to perform such tasks but also on behalf of children to organize work experience through which the usefulness of these skills are rendered abundantly clear. Other submissions carried these sentiments further yet. They argued that a primary purpose of schooling is vocational training of such quality and appeal that students will choose it among viable options rather than attend for want of alternatives. Moreover, running through all these assumptions about the nature of schooling was a powerful indication that, whatever their purposes, schools ought to realize them to the advantage of the widest possible range of children. That is, among others, the very young, the physically handicapped, those with learning disabilities, the gifted, newcomers learning English, drop-ins and part-timers—girls and boys alike—should participate fully in the schools' daily lives and share their perceived benefits.

Though perhaps fewer in number, those who looked to schooling not as an individual advantage but rather as the key to a better social order tended to elaborate their opinions in a wider context and focus on employment and the economy. Two early briefs capture that sense of the purpose of schooling which is typically associated with world trade. The first, the British Columbia Institute of Technology's (BCIT) *Economic Development Through High Technology*,[7] sets the scene with clarity. It makes the point that high technology is not just helping develop new industry; it is also utilizing high technology in existing industries "in order to assure...[B.C.'s] competitiveness in both national and international markets." It further observes that a symbiotic relationship exists between entrepreneurship and management on the one hand and technological innovation on the other which begs encouragement if high technology companies are to flourish in the province. And it goes on to say that since "advanced computing is as important to financial management techniques as it is to engineering process control," the nature and function of office administration as such is "undergoing a technological revolution." Although *Economic Development...* fails to establish the connection between BCIT and the schools, a brief entitled *Some Thoughts on Public Schooling for B.C.*[8] pays close attention to this important question of articulation. Contending that public schooling needs to be rebuilt so as to become attractive and com-

pelling to all young people and their parents, the brief envisages a 21st century relying heavily on the rapid exchange of information allowing an economical and creatively productive use of time. This new century will prove especially generous to small-business enterprise; capabilities appropriate to its success will embrace the generic skills—communication, cooperation, analysis/synthesis, knowing how to learn, positive attitudes, and world understanding. Thus, the purpose of schooling relevant to these requirements becomes one which emphasizes process, utilizes the facilities of the media, the community, and the workplace, erases rigid lines separating elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education, and, accepting the premise that "children are won or lost as learners in the first years of school," lowers the pupil-teacher ratio in these early years and entrusts these boys and girls only to teachers deeply committed both to their school children and to their own professional development.

Recurring Impressions

Before turning to suggestions in light of this discussion, the research group should comment first on four recurring impressions which struck us as paramount.

For a start, professional educators, elected officials, and lay citizens clearly believe that the societal changes described earlier touch schools in many ways and that adapting to these changes, for a variety of reasons, is exceptionally difficult. Regardless of sociological evidence that scores of variables other than "family structure" may prevent children doing well at school, many people related discipline problems, undernourishment, fatigue, ill health, truancy, drug use, inattention, or encounters with the law—each an intrusion into the routines and rhythms of school life—to single parenting and its possible economic consequences or to families with two working parents and their accompanying problems of child supervision. Teachers in particular appeared most sympathetic with children thus affected. They spoke, however, of lacking sufficient resources to deal with the matter.

Regarding the status of women, their minority standing in educational leadership roles scarcely required statistical tables to substantiate; the fact was confirmed by school after school. To be sure, outstanding women superintendents, principals, vice-principals, department heads, and others work with distinction in provincial schools. But teachers and others working with children reported that youngsters to a marked degree continue to relate authority with men. Meantime, parents and students seemed to imply that besides the question of insufficient female leadership role models, stereotypical career lines persisted within the British Columbia school system; girls still opt, say, for nursing as opposed to medicine, dental hygiene instead of dentistry, transport secretarial work rather than bus driving, despite the reverse trend Canada wide.

The impact of a Canadian immigration policy consistent with a multicultural society also prompted comment. Much has been reported via the media on the societal conflict over race, religion, language, history, and custom that plays itself out in the school setting. We must emphasize that wherever we went, educators, with dedication and respect, were doing their utmost to introduce newcomers to a different way of life to the extent that it affected school affairs. At the same time, it was clearly the case that the enormous task stretched resources to the limit and beyond. Language acquisition alone demands extraordinary mentorial efforts. As indicated in a brief from an authority on English as a Second Language (ESL),[9] "approximately 15,000 students are enrolled in ESL programs in B.C. in any one year, 10,000 of them in the Vancouver School District #39. However, thousands more who are beyond the beginning stage...have been integrated into regular classrooms—but they still need help in mastering English." The brief suggests that "it takes approximately two years for a student to master English for social purposes, but five to seven years to master English for academic purposes, that is, to master the language of abstract thought."

As for economic prospects and schooling, though the research group was impressed with the efforts of many schools to acquire computer facilities and with the success of others in installing satellite dishes, observatories, and other sophisticated equipment, parents indicated their children needed far more time on computer training. Students agreed. And teachers declared that computer instruction was in such sudden and heavy demand that systematic teacher preparation in its technology, curriculum, and methodology was not possible to secure with the expedience and to the degree that present circumstances called for. In short, it appeared that much as they would wish otherwise, schools were hard pressed to adapt to widespread social trends concerning families, women, cultural pluralism, and tomorrow's economy.

A second lasting impression is that respondents who envisaged the purpose of schooling as individual fulfilment seemed to live for the present. Put another way, in asking that their children be afforded better educational opportunities, parents tended to seat their requests in a notion of schools and school systems as they exist today. Teachers were prone to do likewise, as were administrators, trustees, and those connected with schools in various other ways. Upon occasion, an original scheme would emerge for screening prospective teachers, for better utilizing pre-paid property taxes, or devising new kinds of schools that would feature far higher degrees of parental participation. But overall, requests, in and of themselves both understandable and desirable, collectively did little to help piece together a vision of a school for the future. On the contrary, reasonable as each such request appeared to be, whether an appeal for enhanced programs in physics or physical education, speech therapy or social studies, mathematics or music, special education or French immersion, each reflected some facet of schooling already long in place; and each—in good faith, be it noted—asked for more, with understandable disregard for others' requests as well as for the strong probability that the near future would produce little new money for the delivery of public services in British Columbia.

In addition to slow response to change and apparent contentment if not with the level of services, at least with the form of schooling presently in operation, a third impression emerged—that schools are asked to provide far more than they can now creatively deliver. Within the essential framework of schooling—teaching and learning—a scramble for time obtains, symbolized in secondary schools by enervating buzzers and the resulting temporal fragmentation. This overwhelming scarcity of time permeates all aspects of school life. Because of exacting tolerances, occasions for tardiness abound. So do chances for unfinished business. Curriculum specialists, the Ministry of Education, universities, parents, and special interest groups seem to propose a course to match every discipline, every interest, every social problem, and these courses vie one with the other within the inexorable workings of a master timetable whose complexities tax the sharpest artificial computer intelligence and govern the daily round with uncompromising rigour.

High school students are quick to testify to this milieu of perpetual haste. They say that uncoordinated homework is a form of curricular cannibalism with dominant subjects eating up time required for other equally deserving studies. They relate instances of multi-chapter work assigned on the eve of critical examinations. They seem obsessed with covering the course, with getting all the notes, with not "missing anything important"; or else they lower their sights and go with the flow. Teachers as well appear caught up in this contest for time. Indeed, few settings attain the depth of demoralization of that most unhappy of sanctuaries: the classroom continually interrupted by latecomers, public address system announcements, assorted knocks on doors, and otherwise legitimate events, such a concert rehearsals or sports day practices, which for the moment threaten the currency of irregular verbs, quadratic equations, the pH factor, or Samuel de Champlain. Somehow, students and teachers manage to squeeze in their demanding curricular and extracurricular activities, and many schools maintain a calm demeanour throughout. Behind the scenes, though, amazing feats of educational brinkmanship sometimes occur.

A final impression is that a strong belief persists, especially at several government levels, that beyond their pedagogical function, schools could be leading agents of social reform. The research group was both interested in and cautious about this perspective. We were interested because it is a very old idea. It was enthusiastically stated in 1848 by the great Massachusetts educator Horace Mann when he argued that education, the "equalizer" of humanity, "does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility towards the rich; it prevents being poor."[10] It was also the hope of 20th century progressives in the United States, Canada, and other western countries. A noted authority draws attention to the way certain humanitarian aspects of progressive education complemented campaigns for improving public health, reducing infant mortality, finding better ways of treating young offenders, and urging legislation that would make life better for "the illegitimate, the deserted, the orphaned, the neglected, and the delinquent."[11] But we were cautious too, not only because of the differences between other times and ours. We were cautious as well because of a timely reminder from a close observer[12] that "although schools do much to shape...society there are much more dynamic forces at work.... These forces, initially technological and economic, and then inevitably social, are dictating the mandate for schools" and not the other way around. In short, we concluded that whereas schools may enhance democracies and economies and life in general, only governments can secure them. We therefore exercise caution in the matter of the purpose of schooling lest schools become scapegoats when democracies and economies and social decency fail.

Suggestions

The research group believes that in thinking about the sort of schools they want, British Columbians should consider with care the central purposes of schooling and constantly relate these purposes to the more particular educational services they wish their schools to provide. In addition, the research group suggests:

> that British Columbia adopt as the chief purposes of its schools the intellectual development of its children, their initial preparation for a calling in life, their apprenticeship in democracy, and their training in a manner consistent with provincial, national, and world economic and technological reality.

In order that these purposes might best be realized, the research group further suggests:

> that critical thinking and problem solving based upon information and experience become the central goal of any school activity whatsoever.

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3. Statistics Canada data throughout.
4. Neil Sutherland. The research group wishes to express its appreciation here for the observations cited or closely considered in this section and later sections of "British Columbia Schools and Society." These were drawn from technical papers or interviews as follows. Jean Barman, "Reflections on Non-Public Schools in British Columbia"; Jerrold R. Coombes, "Accessibility"; Charles Curtis, "French Immersion in British Columbia 1988-2000"; Jörgen Dahlie, "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and Ethnic Studies: Perspectives and Issues in Public Education"; LeRoi B. Daniels, "Diversity"; John D. Dennison, "Postsecondary Education"; Donald Fisher and colleagues, "Privatization and the Public School in British Columbia"; Yvonne Martin-Newcombe, "The School and The Charter of Rights"; Neil Sutherland, "Some Comments on Childhood and Schooling in Anglophone Canada over the Last Thirty Years"; Richard Inglis, interview on Native Indian demography, January 21, 1988; M.F. Whitfield, interview on the school-planning implications of low-birthweight survivors, November 18, 1987; Jim Bowman, occasional papers and conversations from the fall of 1987 through the spring of 1988.
5. A.L. Farley, *Atlas of British Columbia: People, Environment and Resources* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1979), p.4.
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11. Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p.239.
12. Jim Bowman.

2. Multiculturalism

Commissioners of yesteryear have taken careful account of the numerical impact of immigration upon provincial school systems. In his 1960 *Report of the Royal Commission on Education* for example, Dr. Chant noted that "immigration influences the school population in two principal ways." "First," he said, "it brings pre-school and school-age children into the Province." Second, "immigration brings young adults...who raise families...."[1] A third influence should be added to these. Immigration such as transpired over the last quarter century, and especially in the past decade, did not only enlarge school populations; it transformed them socially as well. It brought thousands of children from other parts of Canada and from foreign countries. It introduced them to neighbourhoods unevenly, creating some school populations where 70% or more of the children spoke a language other than English at home. It further complicated an already delicate question of Native Indian education which has eluded satisfactory solution since the days of 19th century missionary activity. And it confronted British Columbia schools with an enormous challenge: the full manifestation, at every stage, and in all circumstances of a child's school life, of the rights to equal protection and benefit under law and according to human decency, "without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, [or] religion...."[2]

Multiculturalism in Perspective

The story of multiculturalism in our province goes back a long way. In precontact days, Native Indians who were the first people of British Columbia knew neither schools nor teachers as we now understand the terms. For them, teaching involved all reputable elders at any suitable location and in agreement over what was most worth knowing. This knowledge included skills necessary for physical survival: flaking points, spearing salmon, making garments and so forth. It embraced attitudes toward the way society got along: respect for age, acceptance of rank, and the like. Further, it recognized spiritual beliefs that helped people conceive of their relationship with the non-human world, realized through myths which explained origins and life cycles and upheavals; thanksgiving ceremonies; healing methods; dances; secret societies. With the coming of Europeans, a cultural round that must have continued for thousands of years was seriously disrupted. Population figures alone make depressing reading. One expert hazards an aboriginal population estimate of at least 80,000 prior to 1835, 70,000 in 1935, 22,605 in 1929 (the low year), and 40,800 by 1963.[3] More up-to-date figures indicate 52,220 in 1971, 64,695 in 1981, and 61,130 in 1986.[4] In a part of the globe whose population over a century and a half has approached three million, an aboriginal group appears to have sustained only three-quarters of its original strength. That seems tragedy enough; to compound it, the initial estimate of 80,000 must now be reconsidered. In a recent review of historical, medical, ethnographic, and archeological evidence, a scholar places the British Columbia figure for precontact Pacific Northwest aborigines at 333,000 and at 500,000 including native peoples of the provincial interior.[5] It can therefore be tentatively assumed that today's aboriginal population could represent not 75% but as little as 12% of its precontact level.

It is upon this astonishing and sorry historical reality that the subsequent account of multiculturalism in British Columbia rests. This is not the place for detailed recapitulation. It must be said, however, that though many who came afterwards fulfilled dreams of fresh starts and incomparable opportunities, others whose language, religion, race, or customs rendered them visible minorities were not so fortunate. On the whole optimistic, a quarter of a century ago a greatly respected historian showed how Native Indian minorities sent their children to church-sponsored day or residential schools and later, as a result of the 1950 Indian Inquiry Act, to the public schools as well.[6] He went on to relate the affecting story of Doukhobor children separated from their prisoner parents, housed in an unused New Denver sanitarium, and sent to the New Denver public school. With faith in the capacity of public schools to solve "minority problems," he declared it "remains to be seen whether this generation of Freedomite children who have been permitted to obtain a public school education will thereby come to understand and perhaps appreciate the responsibilities of Canadian citizenship, and as adults bring to a happy ending a problem which has plagued the Kootenays for half a century."[7] More recently, observers have been less sanguine.

One prominent figure remarked on the inconsistency of government policy on such matters, noting that "the 'assimilation' that government and bureaucrats ruthlessly sought to impose on Doukhobor and Native Indian children was as vigorously withheld from Chinese, Japanese and East Indian children."[8] Another declared that Native Indians in residential schools were isolated from their homes, denied their language, required to learn from books quite contrary to custom, and obliged to study subjects of little use to them upon their return to their communities. Doukhobor children at various times were removed from their homes, established elsewhere, and made to receive instruction in what for them was a foreign language. On the other hand, segregation threatened Chinese immigrant children for over two decades following 1901; strong attempts were made to separate Japanese children from others in the mid 1920s; and because of immigration policies, numbers of East Indian children in public schools up to World War II were never large.

Equally disorienting for these young immigrants must have been the events surrounding their school experiences. Neither Native Indians, Chinese, nor Japanese had the vote and in 1907 British Columbia disenfranchised East Indians, their status as British Subjects notwithstanding. Arson, displacement, and imprisonment marked a half century of Doukhobors' determination to live according to their creed. In 1904, head taxes on immigrant Chinese were raised to $500, an extraordinary sum then. In 1907, a Vancouver meeting of the Asiatic Exclusion League turned violent and windows were shattered in Chinatown and the Japanese sector. In 1908 the "continuous journey" clause incorporated in Canada's immigration laws brought East Indian immigration to a virtual standstill. In 1914 this clause was put to the test—unsuccessfully—as the *Kamagata Maru*, with 376 disappointed and embittered East Indian would-be immigrants aboard, steamed away from Vancouver harbour under gunboat escort. Finally, as of more recent memory and current re-examination, in 1942, people of Japanese origin living within a 100-mile "protection" zone on the British Columbia coast were evacuated to inland or out-of-province concentration camps.[9] Such, then, were the events heralding a vastly elaborated multicultural future. Racism, discrimination, and bigotry were never far beneath the surface of human affairs.

Recent Developments

In matters multicultural, the postwar period was nothing if not eventful. Two social developments occurred along the steep and winding road to a multicultural state. The first of these was the emergence of a Canadian multicultural policy in an unanticipated way. Owing to English-French tensions marking Canadian society during the early 1960s, there was established in 1963 the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. This body soon found out that Canadians of neither English nor French extraction saw in the two-languages, two-cultures notion a certain disparagement of their own cultural roots. While receiving the Commissioners' language recommendations which have since touched all Canadians, the government of the day rejected its cultural recommendations and "boldly opted for a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework."[10] All political parties concurred. In 1971 there was appointed a Minister of State for Multiculturalism and a directorate set in place within the Department of the Secretary of State. It is, of course, one thing to announce a policy or even to create a secretariat. But it is quite another thing to legislate the spirit of multiculturalism.

The second development in this respect—the fact of multiculturalism if you wish—is dramatically demonstrable. The classificatory scheme for population by ethnic origin is a case in point. In 1961, four categories—namely, British Isles, Other European, Asiatic, and Other—embraced 24 ethnic groups by reference to country with the exception of "Jewish," "Native Indian and Eskimo," and "Negro."[11] In 1971, many ethnic groups had sufficiently increased in number as to spill over most general descriptors and increase to 43 separate entities. Such a scheme could not contain reality for long. By 1981, comprehensive categories had been re-established, the idea of both single and multiple ethnic origin introduced, the data organized around some 23 major, sub-, and dependent headings, and no fewer than 93 ethnic groups tabulated. Not just the complexity of Canada's multicultural fact but its trends in British Columbia as well have important consequences for educators. In 1961, of a total provincial population of 1,629,082, the ten most numerous ethnic groups were as follows (next page).[12]

Ethnic Group	*Population*	*% Population*
British	939,268	57.7
German	118,926	7.3
Scandinavian	96,792	5.9
French	66,970	4.1
Netherlands	60,176	3.7
Native Indian	38,814	2.4
Italian	38,399	2.4
Ukrainian	35,640	2.2
Russian	27,448	1.7
Chinese	24,227	1.5

In 1971 with a provincial population of 2,184,620, the picture looked like this.

Ethnic Group	*Population*	*% Population*
British	1,265,455	57.9
German	198,315	9.0
Scandinavian	112,125	5.6
French	96,550	4.4
Netherlands	70,535	3.2
Ukrainian	60,145	2.8
Italian	53,795	2.5
Native Indian	52,220	2.4
Chinese	44,315	2.0
Polish	29,545	1.4

In 1981, the population being 2,713,615, new patterns emerged.[13]

Ethnic Group	*Population*	*% Population*
British	1,385,165	51.0
German	187,630	6.9
Chinese	96,915	3.6
French	92,310	3.4
Scandinavian	85,035	3.1
Netherlands	72,280	2.7
Native Peoples	64,695	2.4
Ukrainian	63,605	2.3
Indo-Pakistani	56,210	2.0
Italian	52,765	1.9

Finally, with reference to a 1986 population of 2,849,585, the numerical rank order (single origin) is as follows.

Ethnic Group	*Population*	*% Population*
British	1,759,810	61.8
German	148,280	5.2
Chinese	112,605	4.0
South Asians	69,250	2.4
French	68,965	2.4
Netherlands	62,945	2.2
Aboriginal Peoples	61,130	2.1
Scandinavian	52,560	1.8
Ukrainian	48,200	1.7
Italian	46,755	1.6

Several educational implications lie embedded in these and related data. First, besides the ten ethnic groups rank ordered according to the 1986 Census figures, another 38 (several of them composite) are listed, seven of which (Polish, Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese, Russian, Hungarian, and Jewish) show populations of 19,305, 15,905, 15,810, 15,535, 14,710, 13,000, and 12,230 respectively, significant communities by any measure. Second, the urban areas attract immigrants not just to certain cities and towns[14] but also to particular locations within these areas, at times concentrating the responsibility of working creatively with ethnicity in certain neighbourhoods or even particular schools. Third, the steady increase of the Chinese ethnic community over the past 25 years is noteworthy, as is the rapid development of the South Asian community. Fourth, following a relative dip in 1981, British ethnicity attained in 1986 a quarter-century high numerically and proportionately. Fifth, though some rank-order shuffling takes place as French, Scandinavian, and Italian move down and Chinese and South Asian move up, the provincial ethnic mosaic nonetheless retains a strikingly European and markedly British pattern. And, sixth, the Native Indian community maintains a fairly steady place, though by 1986 massively outnumbered by European, Oriental, and Asiatic ethnic groups. As a leading scholar remarked of such cultural mixes, "the challenges to schools and educators in this context are imposing: how to go about the business of insuring appropriate reflection of the diversity without losing sight of the larger aims of educating for a productive, socially responsible citizenry."[15]

Native Indian Perspectives

Such, then, was the background and some of the current facts which formed the social context of the inquiry among the cities, towns, villages, hamlets, and scattered rural settlements in the most remote parts of British Columbia. Nor, perhaps, was it entirely by chance that some of the first and continuing encounters with multicultural concerns were with Native Indian citizens. Indeed, a fundamental lesson, from eloquent, hospitable Native Peoples along the river valleys and islands of the Pacific Northwest, was that even the term "Native Indian" was a cultural misnomer in the first place, based on the absurd, misleading historical peculiarity of Columbus's and other materially ambitious European adventurers' dreams of discovering an Indian continent by wishing away an American one. We are the Haida, the Tsimshian, the Kwakiutl, the Gitksan, the Haisla, a patient elder explained. He and others also insisted that among the many demands today's schooling makes upon students, knowing who they are in every cultural dimension is the proper education of the Native child. Foremost in priority would be language. A well-founded fear existed among Native communities that languages, vital to cultural survival, were approaching extinction. Several spokespeople told of language renewal classes well under way; others described how those with the knowledge passed along to Native youth the aesthetic, spiritual, and technical accomplishments of their forbears, evidence of which is found in the magnificence of the carving, graphic arts, dances, stories, songs, artifacts, traditional building, and marine design that after a lapse of so many years once again grace the British Columbia scene. But successful though many such inter-generational acts of cultural transmission and revitalization have clearly proven, they have by no means overcome all of the difficulties attending cultural identity.

As expressed by members of the Native Peoples' community these difficulties are threefold. To begin with, in both band and non-band public schools, attendance is hard to sustain and the dropout rates are high. Far fewer Native boys and girls than their non-Native counterparts are likely to proceed to post-secondary education. Many of their parents received minimal schooling themselves and are reluctant to force the issue with their children despite recognition by their political and educational leaders that professional training and public service by men and women from the Native community constitute a crucial component of efforts toward cultural survival and growth. Financial support from both federal and provincial sources in aid of school and other programs is seen as never adequate to the larger educational task. The availability of qualified Native teachers within the provincial school system continues as distressingly disproportionate to existing Native population figures.[16] There are reports, too, from tribal councils of crippling social problems affecting Native children and including alcoholism, physical and sexual abuse, and nutritional insufficiency.

A second hindrance to full cultural liberation and one of long standing is said to be cultural stereotyping, a frustrating barrier to intellectual and cultural development for Native children in the predominantly (or even partially) non-Native schools. As a Prince Rupert school counsellor implied, Native children are frequently anticipated as problems and, through the curious and sometimes negative workings of self-fulfilling prophecy, become so. A member of the North Coast Tribal Council elaborated. Teacher attitudes, she declared, may reflect how the public at large has come to view

Native Peoples. "We are stereotyped as failures," she said. "Over the years, attention to our problems has proved distant, and determined efforts to understand us lacking. Meantime, strong systems of learning and survival, once the core of Native existence, have been lost, as, in many aspects of daily life, has respect for our primacy as First People." A third obstacle to Native cultural integrity appeared to be the lack of constructive education of non-Native British Columbians—children especially—in the cultural actualities of Native history and society. Others "do not understand Native People," said a respondent, "because they do not know or learn of such things in schools." Some non-Native observers agreed. "We do not use the cultural resources of the Indian community enough," said one participant. "We are not sharing the Indian culture," stated another. "We need to give them the opportunity of having something to offer, to be a part of our society. We should celebrate Indian Day instead of St. Patrick's Day." These sentiments seemed well meaning and educationally desirable. That they showed good faith in the power of schools to eradicate cultural misunderstanding and injustice was, we believed, an encouraging sign. That in themselves they could expunge social prejudice or rectify widespread educational, economic, and social disadvantages, however, remains unlikely. Amelioration in this respect doubtless awaits determined political action.

Problems In Sampling

A topically related question bears interjection at this point. An inherent irony affected hearings in regions whose citizenry included numerous visible minorities. It stemmed from the reluctance of these minorities to come forward, and the possible exclusionary effect of this phenomenon upon the record of hearings. The research group stands by its impressions in the matter of multiculturalism, but concedes that evidence presented through briefs and at public hearings may well have been affected by the above and similar hesitations. In our opinion it could also have been tempered by the fact that multiculturalism, which for a variety of philosophical reasons is a question of foremost educational importance, seemed not to have been of stated critical import to British Columbians who *did* speak out.

The research group felt it would have been foolish to conclude that on matters of multiculturalism as they affected British Columbians and their schools, it was time for self-congratulation. To do so would have been to fly in the face of widely reported instances of ethnic-labelled youth gang violence, immigration irregularities, distorted hate literature, international terrorism affecting Canadian citizens, and the lesser ethnic slurs and slights that mark the working, relaxing, and reflective hours of Canadians temporarily outside their cultural milieu. In this respect, we felt we were not alone. We noted, for instance, that the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) states as a general policy that provincial educational goals should be directed toward ensuring "protection from discrimination on the basis of place of birth, place of residence, sex, age, race, religion, and socio-economic status...."[17] The Ministry of Education also addresses the question. Recognizing cultural diversity within the school system and referring directly to Native Peoples in the province, it raises the matter of conflicting values, observing that resolution and mediation "require people who can learn about others and effectively communicate their own views." The British Columbia Multicultural Education Society commends the Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education statement that "multiculturalism promotes human and group relations in which ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic similarities and differences are valued and respected." Members of UBC's Centre for Policy Studies in Education go so far as to assert that despite its pedagogical responsibilities, the real role of the public school is to bring people to different backgrounds together under a sound pluralistic policy. Given these and similar declarations, we could only conclude that, lack of specific testimony notwithstanding,[18] the incidence of untoward events based upon racial or cultural ignorance must create within schools problems of a magnitude belying the willingness of those most affronted to address the Commission about them.

Problems of Multiculturalism

At a rudimentary level, cited problems of multiculturalism consisted of forms of textual misrepresentation through illustration, description, or omission.[19] A respondent[20] who informed the Commission on teacher resources offered in evidence a seemingly innocent-enough children's book which upon closer inspection was found to represent Chinese children in an absurd and condescending way. It was not always easy, he said, to select learning resources which would enhance race relations and the multicultural climate in schools and communities. Thus, the danger of offensive

stereotyping was something which required a teacher's undivided attention. A second level of difficulty, compounded by initial language barriers, lay in incorporating children of diverse cultures into the full social life of the school. Efforts to do so, we learned, were sometimes hampered by conventions of dress and deportment, the understandable tendency of like minorities to socialize exclusively among themselves, and the hesitation of parents from visible minorities to respond to the school's overtures to join them in the educational enterprise.

A third obstacle in the path of a true multicultural spirit in the schools was at once more serious and more subtle. Called "blaming the victim," it assumed that calls by new Canadians for special consideration or appeals about discriminatory treatment ought to be overridden by the newcomer's thankfulness over the supposed advantages of the new environment, an attitude which both denies the high level of emotional risk involved in the immigrant experience and feeds the flames of intercultural hostility even in young children. A last and most serious threat to a sane multicultural atmosphere within the schools was violence itself. This, we found, extended from insulting nicknames, through mockery of imperfect English and vulgarities aimed at religious or social custom including dress, to bodily assault. We add in reference to all these problems that they occur among minority groups as well as between majority and minority groups, and they transcend school boundaries.

Reflections

Before proffering suggestions, we wish to make three final points. First of all, the schools of British Columbia have been sensitive to the multicultural issue for many years following the postwar influx of New Canadians which peaked in the late '50s and again in the late '60s and '70s. Certain districts employ race relations consultants and many schools benefit from ethnically representative community advisory or consultative committees. More often than not, these schools produce multilingual newsletters informing parents of school policies and events. The more fortunate among them likewise are able to recruit and retain teaching staffs which to a large extent confirm the ethnic composition of their student body. Most of all, there are schools in British Columbia which have achieved a high level of multicultural harmony, creativity, and attractive personality. We make these observations lest it should be thought that the whole question is one of recent origin and largely unattended. Not so. Our concern is that with multiculturalism as the social fact of the future, there can be no let-up, only systematic improvement. Secondly, a word about point of view. As the foregoing discussion intends to convey, there is no doubting the reality of the psychological trauma to which all Canadian immigrants and especially immigrants from non-British, U.S., or European cultures are heir. Without intent to minimize such trauma, we are nonetheless instructed by an astute reminder that "immigrants have always *used* [our emphasis] the schools, in the best sense of that word."

"Much has been made," our advisor[21] goes on, "of the institutional and educational obstacles in the way of new Canadians but the view from within the immigrant communities themselves has not always concurred with that conclusion. What has been made clear in the research of the past quarter century is that the stereotyping of the immigrants (and their children) as passive recipients of the largesse of the host society is no longer tenable. Recent studies seem to indicate that the immigrant, far from being buffeted about by economic and social forces beyond his control, is rather an individual who has taken decisive control of his life. Many studies suggest that it was the better educated, more highly motivated, successful person who was likely to head for the New World, and he or she would bring with them a keen sense of their cultural heritage."

Lastly, what are the reasonable limits of multiculturalism in the school setting? A good way to think of them in this connection is to consider multiculturalism a special manifestation of diversity, the recognition of which is one criterion of a well-functioning open society. Overall, we would wish that British Columbia schools would not just accommodate multiculturalism but rejoice in it. Conversely, many other aspects of diversity affect today's schools and deserve attention. Accordingly, the school preoccupied with just one of them could be accused of thereby reducing its overall openness. How, then, to proceed? Recent scholarship[22] identifies two intermingled principles at work here. One is the primacy of respect for persons in a society at large or within its institutions including schools. The other is the primacy of the school's epistemological role: that is, its function as the place where both knowledge and the modes of enquiry used to acquire knowledge are disseminated among the young. In the first instance, then, "respect for persons and diversity both require the school system to foster attitudes and organize itself to ensure equality of access and treatment for all visible minorities." And in the second instance—the school's epistemological role—two considerations obtain. One

is that only in an atmosphere of mutual respect among children can sound learning in any subject effectively occur. The other is that part of learning thereby made possible should relate to multiculturalism—its cultural content which might enhance history, geography, art, music, comparative religion, or drama lessons; and its pathology in relation to which the iniquities of racism might constitute a proper part of moral education programs. Here, then, the test of a school's willingness and capacity to deal humanely with the multicultural nature of the children it helps educate becomes its ability to nurture mutual respect and to gather strength from good social tone thereby established, the better to realize the school's central responsibility—the transmission and pursuit of knowledge.

Suggestions

The research group hopes all British Columbians will think carefully about the province's multicultural heritage which is a social reality permeating provincial life. As well, it suggests:

1. that as a step toward the preparation of teachers who are to spend a lifetime educating young people in a multicultural society, teacher trainees be required to study Canadian history, as well as philosophy with special emphasis on ethics;

2. that in a form appropriate to their age, children receive instruction in the provisions of *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;

3. that non-Native children living in areas ancestral to British Columbia's Native Peoples enjoy the opportunity to learn about the cultural heritage of Native Peoples through instructional visits to Native Peoples' museums, galleries, studios, workshops, business and agricultural enterprises, fishing and lumber operations, dance and musical demonstrations, and other places of Native culture and activity;

4. that Native Indian Teacher Education Programs (including their Native councils and consultants) maintain their efforts to increase the number of qualified Native Indian teachers currently employed in British Columbia schools;

5. that British Columbia schools renew their efforts to understand what school factors contribute to the high dropout and low attendance rates of Native students, what elements stem from other factors (e.g., early work, parental unemployment), and what action may be taken for remedial purposes.

References

1. S.N.F. Chant, *Report of the Royal Commission on Education* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1960), p.33.

2. See Section 15(1), *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. We have commented elsewhere on discrimination based on sex, age, or disability which completes the list of discriminatory bases under this section. The issue of multiculturalism as it affects language instruction was discussed in "The Purpose of Schooling."

3. Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia*, Vol. 1, "The Impact of the White Man," Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir No. 5 (Victoria: Provincial Museum of British Columbia, 1964), p.39.

4. Note that data on aboriginal origin are not directly comparable from the 1981 and 1986 Censuses in that (a) in 1986, some 136 Indian reserves did not participate, and (b) the formulation of the ethnic-origin question in 1986 differed from the one used in 1986.

5. Richard Inglis interview.

6. F. Henry Johnson, A History of Public Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: Publications Centre, UBC, 1964), pp 135-136.

7. *Ibid.*, p.147.

8. Rosemary Brown, "Introduction," in Mary Ashworth, *The Forces Which Shaped Them* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1979), p.i.

9. These events are described by Mary Ashworth, *ibid.*

10. Sol Littman, Multiculturalism Canada, Cross-Cultural Awareness Education and Training for Professionals: A Manual (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1985), p.1.

11. The inability of this taxonomy to provide categories consistent with national antecedence is itself an indication of the subtleties and complexities of the multiculturalism issue.

12. Statistics Canada data throughout.

13. Single origin.

14. See "The Purpose of Schooling," p.3.

15. Jörgen Dahlie.

16. John Andrews wrote in 1974 that "there are only approximately 25 certificated Indian teachers working in [B.C.] schools. If their number were proportionate to their population there would be approximately 600." See The Committee on Teacher Education, Teacher Education and Training of Teachers in British Columbia (Vancouver: Agency Press, 1974). The research group learned that only seven candidates graduated from 23 who enrolled in a recent Native Indian teacher education program in Hazelton.

17. This general sentiment is repeated as a BCTF goal with the added categories of handicaps, marital status, sexual orientation, number of dependents, and pregnancy.

18. As indicated in the above discussion, the Native Peoples' community was a resolute and articulate exception.

19. For example, the infrequency of pictures of minority groups.

20. Eric Wong, British Columbia Multicultural Education Society.

21. Jörgen Dahlie.

22. By L.B. Daniels.

3. Rural Inequality

Although the majority of British Columbians live in the greater metropolitan area of the province's south western corner, most school districts serve children and parents located outside this territory. This is not to say that North Coast, North Central, Cariboo, Okanagan, Thompson, Peace River, Kootenay, and other regions are in any absolute sense rural. On the contrary, their principal settlements offer many facilities comparable to those taken for granted in metropolitan centres, often with the added advantage of convenient access to superb natural settings still largely unspoiled. Moreover, some of the most beautiful and best run schools in the province are to be found in these north coastal, northern, inland, and island communities. On the fringes of many of these districts, however, rural life continues both as a geographical and economic fact and as a state of mind. In educational terms, many schools are located in relative isolation and operate with less than generous resources; and many students, teachers, parents, administrators, and trustees admit to experiencing a sense of abandonment by central educational authorities.

Provincial Geography and Schools

The sobering realities of British Columbia geography—its far-flung political boundaries, unyielding topography, pitiless winters, disabling backroads, inhospitable seaways, wave-swept islands, scattered and uneven settlement—furnish the principal theme of our educational history. Such factors prompted the one-room school of mostly fond memory, about which commissioners of an earlier day declared that some were "tidy and clean inside and some sadly in need of paint, whitewash and soap." They also accustomed the children, teachers, and parents using or sustaining these little wooden schools and their later, larger rural counterparts to the familiar, enduring hallmarks of rural schooling—lunch pail; hand bell; water crock; rustic flagpole; outhouse; wood stove; school bus or school sleigh; Christmas concert; inspector's visit; and, more than occasionally, the acute loneliness of the city-born teacher. As recently as 1971, over a hundred one-room schools still helped to cushion the severity of rural solitude. At least 18 operated during the 1987-88 school year. But irreversible population concentration in the south coast lowlands and steady clustering along southern valleys and on north central plateaus spelled an end to most of these small units. Enlarged or abandoned, they yielded to bigger institutions employing at least five and sometime over 20 teachers. Yet in the minds of rural dwellers, many of the problems these larger replacements were established to eradicate persisted as nagging reminders of rural isolation and, especially, of its impact on that equality of educational opportunity which the *Public Schools Act* of 1872 had been drafted to provide.

As education commissioners have since reported, the challenge of providing rural children with educational chances commensurate with those enjoyed by youngsters in more densely settled localities proceeded unabated. In their 1925 *Survey of the School System*, for example, Commissioners J.H. Putman and G.M. Weir spoke of boys and girls "housed and taught in buildings and environment of great variety and marked contrast." Some studied in modern city buildings or comfortable frame buildings in small towns. Others occupied log schoolhouses "not larger than 15 by 18 feet with a ceiling just above your head." Some children went to schools with attractive playgrounds set amid scenic grandeur. Others inhabited schools on bare, rocky sites near pulp mills, smelters, canneries, or coal mines. More to the point, while some students had teachers of long experience and service, others suffered the worst consequences of massive teacher turnover—a different, inexperienced teacher at least every year and sometimes oftener. A decade later, the technical adviser to the Commission on School Finance, Major H.B. King, described "a small isolated British Columbia school" whose teacher, "a Coast girl under twenty years of age and without teaching experience," survived a rural school upheaval more by luck than management in what King termed an act of "local administration at its worst." Then, in 1945, Commissioner Maxwell A. Cameron was appointed to study and advise on school finance. An educational historian reviews the provincial educational circumstances that were faced. "One of the inevitable consequences of the small size of...rural districts," he writes,

was that any educational programme offered could only be the barest minimum and the children from such districts frequently were deprived of opportunities for secondary education. In many cases there were too few pupils to warrant a secondary school.

In most cases the inadequate educational standards in the small districts were due to poverty. Many districts were far too small as taxing units. Throughout the province there were great differences in ability to pay for education and in the burden of school taxes.[1]

With customary wit, Cameron sized up his territory and his chances of success. "Nature," he observed, "with an irritating disregard of the problem of school administration, has decreed that no system will produce perfect equality in British Columbia." In 1960, Commissioner S.N.F. Chant examined the problem of rural educational inequality as it affected supervision and teacher supply. Of the former he declared that some district superintendents (as school inspectors had by then been redesignated) were stretched beyond reasonable limits. He said superintendencies varied in area from 5.5 to 130,000 square miles; that superintendents travelled from 1,200 to 28,000 miles a year; that schools-per-superintendent ranged from 13 to 48; and that visits each year varied from 50 to over 400. As for the extremes of rural school isolation that superintendents might at times encounter, he noted that "there were twenty-one schools that could not be reached when air travel was prevented by bad weather, while eight are in the same position with regard to water travel. Another seventy-seven schools cannot be reached by road either during the spring thaw or after a heavy rain fall." Concerning teacher supply, Chant confirmed on the one hand that rural districts continued to be plagued with limited availability, disproportionately large annual turnover, and inadequate certification at the high school level. Teachers, on the other hand, gave as their reasons for preferring posts in larger centres "the real or assumed lack of opportunity for advancement...in the small centres; the desire to take advantage of the opportunities for further training...available in the Vancouver and Victoria areas; a feeling that more prestige was associated with being on the staff of a city school; and the reluctance of some teachers who were city dwellers to take up residence in rural districts."

Historic Proposals

According to their eras, data, and styles of thought, the Commissioners brought forth their recommendations. Putman and Weir proposed that the provincial normal schools attend more closely to training teachers to serve in ungraded rural schools; that appointments to isolated one-room schools be made not by local boards but by the Department of Education on the advice of the local inspector; that rural teachers receive an extra incentive grant payable directly to them; and that a special course of studies designed around four progress groups be prepared for one-room schools in rural areas. King's recommendations were, in Johnson's view, "drastic to the point of being revolutionary." In 1933-34, King noted, there existed in B.C. 826 districts and 733 of these had only 930 teachers—evidence of the prevalence of one-room schools vulnerable to what he most feared, inept local administration. His solution—totally rejected as it transpired—was a centrally articulated scheme of area and department directors reporting directly to the Superintendent of Education in Victoria. Local boards were to be abolished; local interest was to be sustained through parent-teacher associations; and teachers were to be deployed "upon an impersonal, objective basis" by a department-appointed committee. By contrast, what alarmed Cameron was that such tight centralization would lead to undesirable consequences such as rigidity, conformity, "rules and regulations, and the slavish adherence to precedent."

"Distances are so great," he added, "and conditions so varied that no central office, no matter how enlightened and well intentioned, could adjust its policies to them." He counselled that administration of education through local boards be maintained. His major advocacy, however, was for a reorganization and consolidation of some 650 school districts into 74 large units each of which possessed a large enough revenue base to match the requirements for "a reasonably adequate schooling for grades one to twelve," financed in combination with a provincial grant intended to even out inter-district discrepancies. These new districts would "do all that geography and the distribution of the population allow to provide adequate schooling under its care," and where feasible, set up centrally located dormitories for rural students who might otherwise experience difficulty completing high school. In comparison with the severity of the problem of supervision, Chant's proposals for their solution appeared modest. He called for administrative changes within the Department of Education to enable it to keep abreast of continuous expansion of educational services across the province and for an increase in the number of district superintendents. His plan for "encouraging teachers...to accept positions in the districts where their services are most urgently needed" proved far more imaginative however.

It consisted of loans for student teachers of up to $1,000 per year for each of four years of teacher education. The quid pro quo was assignment to a rural area. The purpose was to ameliorate the pressing difficulties of rural teacher supply, among other ways by persuading "young people who come from rural and semi-rural homes to accept employment in the type of locality with which they are familiar."

These reports, spanning 35 formative years of provincial education, enjoyed mixed reception. King was all but ignored. Cameron was implemented virtually in toto. Putman and Weir left a legacy of a newly conceived junior high school, a four-year high school, a revised examination scheme, wide-ranging curriculum reform, and a philosophy of progressive education very broadly construed; but their somewhat timid recommendations regarding rural education made little difference to rural schooling. To a degree, Chant's advice on supervision was pursued and in a general way, university and government loans to prospective teachers (as to other undergraduates) became perhaps more common. It is rather hard to determine, though, the degree to which this student aid or any other commission recommendation ameliorated deep-seated resentment over rural educational inequality. On balance, it is probable in this last connection that Cameron's 1945 report on educational finance, the legislation it inspired, and the subsequent changes it effected did most to help redress rural grievances.

These are the basic historical facts of the rural inequality issue, an issue inextricably entangled in the geographic and economic realities of our provincial life. It is an issue of long standing, the bequest of no particular government, and has defied satisfactory solution for over a century, not only in British Columbia but also on the world stage wherever city, frontier, and hinterland exist under common jurisdiction. Having said this, the research group acknowledges that such a review in itself is cold comfort to citizens who face the problem every day. It follows that we deem it important to record here something of the variety of vision and intensity of feeling the issue evoked around the Province.

Provincial Perspectives

The record shows a province with a strong sense of its geographic diversity; keen preferences as to coast or island, valley or plateau, forest or delta; and robust local loyalties founded on family histories, compatible occupations, recreational opportunities, climate, and spiritual fulfillment. Despite extensive connections by telephone, media, road, rail, air, and water, there still exists in rural and especially northern rural communities a latent self-consciousness often expressed with reference to the "south" or the "coast"—a sense, as it were, that being rural or being northern means being different and therefore deserving of special attention and consideration. Complementary to this outlook is the corollary that authorities in the south or at the coast are either unable or unwilling to understand rural problems. A simple illustration would be that goods and services cost more in the north, a reality allegedly overlooked or ignored by authorities in the south.

In the matter of education, many observations in the record constitute an impressive variation on the above example. A dramatic case in point concerned teacher supply, with teacher turnover ranging from 37% (Mackenzie) to 62% (a Kitwanga school).[2] Some alluded to the high cost of securing support for professional development, one speaker telling of annual personal expenditures of $2,000 on "'exposure' to experts." We were reminded that while northern regions expended much time, money, and anxiety on teacher recruitment, all it took for lower mainland boards was "to make a phone call" for a trained teacher. Others asserted that established teachers were disinclined to leave lower mainland posts and that northern boards were in any event unable to afford Ontario-level salary scales further to tempt them; that those who *did* come to work in the north "went south as soon as they could"; that in any case certain localities had "not much to offer" teachers; and that although student teachers had at one time given rural districts a boost in the fresh ideas they imported and upon occasion in their staying on as regular staff, the universities had cut back on student teacher placement in the remoter districts. Underlying many of these comments, too, was the long-held perception that northern and other rural areas provide on-the-job training for beginning teachers who no sooner achieved a measure of practical proficiency than they departed for more attractive assignments.

Remarks to this effect could be blunt. "At present," declared one participant at a north coast hearing, "Prince Rupert develops teachers for the lower mainland." At Mackenzie, another remarked that after hiring a certificated teacher, a northern district often must "spend money developing...[that] teacher until he is a good one." Two solutions characteristically emerged. One was to encourage people *from* remote communities "to go south, get trained, and return

north." The other, reiterated upon numerous occasions, was to set up teacher preparation facilities at strategic places throughout the province where, in collaboration with area schools, trainees might enjoy the advantages of formal studies, extended internships, and radically reduced financial strain. One further solution proposed for consideration was rewarding a given number of consecutive years of rural teaching by paying off loans incurred in teacher training (an idea explored in 1960 by Chant, incidentally), or by providing lump sum bonuses for similar purposes.

No less striking was the incessant charge of inequality when it came to post-secondary educational opportunities. Time after time we were reminded about the seriousness of this problem, its extent, and its impact upon the morale of students, teachers, and parents in rural settings. Sometimes the problem would be framed in financial terms. A northern student asked why he should have to pay transportation costs to be interviewed at UBC without guarantee of acceptance. Another rural student said that to afford advanced studies, he would have to work a year for each year at university. Yet another believed a conservative estimate for a northerner to earn a British Columbia university degree would be $25,000, while a fourth reckoned that living away from home to pursue higher studies could run to $550 a month—a sum, it was thought, inconsistent with any useful definition of equal educational opportunity. Some, particularly in the Peace River area, expressed their financial misgivings in comparative terms, noting that they were far better off to attend college out of the province and citing as their incentive fees of $500 per annum at Grande Prairie College as opposed to $1,400 at similar post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. Others spoke of administrative peculiarities such as the fact that certain regional colleges provided no university transfer for courses completed under their aegis. And one very persuasive visitor, alluding neither to financial hindrances nor personal inconvenience but rather to community well-being, showed how these restricted chances for youngsters to get a post-secondary education had "long term effects" on rural communities by denying them well-trained local professionals (speech therapists for instance) who could return to their homes and work among people they knew.

On both sides of this last manifestation of the rural-inequality issue, people voiced related concerns. On the one hand, academic preparation even to qualify for admission to post-secondary education was in certain rural locations perceived as a problem in its own right. An alert student in a remote settlement typified the perplexity of many. "We can get Physics 11," he said, "but not Physics 12 which is a university prerequisite." This fundamental dilemma came in for regular questioning. All seemed to agree that on the face of it much wider ranges of secondary studies would surely enhance academic preparation. But others pointed out that in small high schools with modest resources, broadened programs would result in small classes and confront teachers with heavy teaching loads and excessive preparation, some of it in areas for which they may not themselves be properly qualified. Nor, in the opinion of yet others, was correspondence instruction the answer. Further, concerning programs available for post-secondary admission, the presumed (and doubtless real) advantage of "coast" schools over rural ones, together with a putative high failure rate among rural candidates attending northern colleges, was inevitably countenanced as yet another instance of rural inequality. On the other hand, despite their intimation that travel, subsistence, and other grants would even out overall provincial access, allowing a fairer proportion of young people from inland and insular communities to enjoy an education elsewhere, many parents in comparatively remote locales expressed reservations about having their children stray too far from home for any reason whatsoever. Young northerners, they would confide, were mostly unused to city life. Distance from families and "culture shock" sustained in unfamiliar, crowded surroundings to the south often led, they said, to distraction and homesickness that placed their education in jeopardy. Living quarters, whether on a university or college campus or privately arranged, they regarded with hesitation; a description was offered of life in a university dormitory as "one everlasting party." As with related personal cost factors, the antidote to this and other social impediments facing rural youth seeking university education emerged as satellite university campuses appropriately situated throughout the province with a view, as a concerned rural dweller put it, to training "those from the north, in the north, to work in the north."

Definitions and Concepts

Understandably, available data on rural education do not necessarily address point by point and with corresponding emphases the anxieties raised during hearings or transmitted in written briefs. Terminology, too, can be perplexing. The terms "rural" and "north," though at times synonymous, are not necessarily so and "rural" by itself can describe a wide variety of conditions. There are rural schools in the Fraser Valley, for instance, which exhibit all the characteristics of small size, country setting, and busing typifying the rural school of old, yet are part of middle sized school dis-

tricts, are close to many social and cultural activities and opportunities, and lie within convenient day-return driving distance of Canada's third-largest city. There are rural schools near Fort St. John of similar size and style, located on or near main transportation routes, but without ready access to major cities. And there are rural schools along the desolate reaches of Stikine and Cassiar whose winter roads test the mettle of the most intrepid driver and whose inhabitants must sometimes stay put for months at a time. The word "inequality" also presents its semantic challenges. Many "rural" citizens spoke of not having a fair chance, not enjoying equal educational opportunity. But it was not always clear what the nature of such opportunity might be—whether, that is, opportunity meant proportionate per capita support, rural and non-rural school alike, or whether it suggested some desired outcome comparable, say, to an outcome already achieved in a non-rural areas, such as a level of reading competence or the frequency of post-secondary admission. The latter point of view assumes that it takes unequal opportunity to bring about equal outcomes.

Provincial Data

Province wide, information on teacher turnover is not easy to secure. No doubt the retrenchment process of the early 1980s and the decline in enrollment over the same period has radically reduced teaching appointments (witness the meagre space currently afforded *Sun* and *Province* classified column 68—Teachers Wanted). What is more, practising teachers who at one time would perhaps have exercised a marked degree of professional mobility by actively seeking living and working conditions closest to their aspirations, today tend to be cautious in this respect. Conversely, short-term teacher service is certainly on record, mostly in the remoter parts of the province.

The case of Mackenzie Secondary School located in the Rocky Mountain Trench near the south tip of Williston Lake dramatizes the problem. This school, Grades 8 to 12, cares for about 450 students. Its turnover pattern over six years appears as follows.

Year	*No. of staff*	*No. of staff changes*	*Turnover*
1980-81	29*		
1981-82	32	7	7/32 = 22%
1982-83	32	4	4/32 = 13%
1983-84	30	5	5/30 = 17%
1984-85	30	4	4/30 = 13%
1985-86	27	3	3/27 = 11%
1986-87	27	10	10/27 = 37%
			Average = 19%

*base year used for comparison

The school principal[3] comments on these arresting figures. "The years 1982-86," he observes, "are commonly referred to as the restraint years, that is, the years during which the teaching force was being downsized. Districts were dealing with surplus teachers, and teaching opportunities were difficult to find. Even during these years Mackenzie Secondary School experienced an average of 13.5% teacher turnover. In the pre-restraint years the turnover was substantially greater. In 1981-82, for example, the rate was 22%."

The 1986-87 school year, the principal goes on, "is generally referred to as the beginning of the post-restraint period, and Ministry/District early retirement incentives have been introduced to provide for new teachers. Typically, however, the majority of older teachers is concentrated in the more desirable geographical areas of the Province and it is in these areas that the greatest number of teaching opportunities, due to early retirement, will occur. Mackenzie Secondary School's 1986-87 school year will serve as an example of what will likely happen. At the end of the 1986-87 school year, half of the 37% teacher turnover was attributed to offers from lower mainland School Districts. After northern School Districts incur the costs of recruiting, in-servicing, and on-the-job training, other School Districts obtain the services of a trained, experienced and proven teacher at the cost of a phone call. The continuing drain of experienced teachers calls into question the equity of educational opportunities for the youngsters residing in northern School Districts. The inevitable District-Province and School-District comparisons of student performance on

Grade 12 Government Examinations add to the burden of the inexperienced teachers who are subtly exhorted to improve results. These are the same inexperienced teachers who answer to the scrutiny of Examination results by the External Accreditation Team and who attempt to deal with recommendations on improving Examination results. The resulting anxieties add a substantial burden to new teachers who are attempting to internalize the fundamentals of teaching."

The related questions of specialization and professional development have recently come to the attention of two provincial agencies, the Small Secondary School Project and the Task Force on Small School Districts. The first of these has generated a set of goals and objectives (presumably addressing perceived shortcomings) which refer among other things to the small schools' difficulty in deploying specialist teachers for their senior elective programs. The second group points out several teacher-related problems requiring solution. These include more training in meeting special needs, in-service training through exchanges, increased funding for further training on the job, and help in keeping abreast of the operation and materials of the Correspondence Education Branch. Overall, this task force writes that "small school districts find they must spend more to meet the practical staffing needs of their schools, and consequently have to enrich educational programs in other ways."

In the matter of access to post-secondary education, the question of comparative cost to high school graduates is complex, obviously depending upon an applicant's location in the province, institution to be attended, mode and frequency of transportation from home, level of shelter and subsistence required, and friends-and-relatives network. An illuminating case in point, however, is the following 1985 estimate prepared by the University of Victoria.

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

A Comparison of Expenses:
Victoria-Based Students vs Rural Students

Expenses	*Victoria Student*	*Rural Student*
Tuition	$1,290.00	$1,290.00
Alma Mater Society & Athletics	71.00	71.00
Textbooks	350.00	350.00
Local Transportation, Recreation, Grooming	1,250.00	1,250.00
Residence vs Apartment	Home	1,482.00 - 2,120.00
Utilities	Home	0.00 - 240.00
Food Costs	Home	1,560.00 - 1,760.00
Travel, Moving & Housekeeping	Home	853.00*
Total Costs	2,961.00	6,856.00 - 7,934.00

Average Annual Cost Differential for Rural Students, $4,434.00

Average Total Cost Differential for Rural Students, $17,736.00**

* Average Cost of Two Return Trips Home per Year
**Accumulated over a Four Year Program

The bottom-line figure—a cost differential of more than $17,000 separating Victoria and rural students—is symptomatic of a Canada-wide post-secondary accessibility problem described by experts in the field. The history of our community colleges, they show, has been one of breaking down barriers: "financial barriers, through maintenance of low tuition fee levels combined with substantial government-sponsored student aid programmes; geographic barriers, by becoming established in virtually every major population centre, and by reaching out to smaller communities and individual citizens in remote areas through distance education and correspondence means; social barriers, by welcoming students of all backgrounds, ages, abilities, and educational interests."[4] But, they explain, a declining national economy spelled diminished accessibility. Fees increased. Part-time services diminished. Admission standards stiffened. And by the late 1980s, places proved insufficient. For rural dwellers, this and similar disappointments came as bad news. "Every time there is pressure to reduce costs of colleges," the authors continue, "the temptation to circle

the wagons around the major campuses is most inviting. People in smaller communities rarely can marshal the political support available in large cities." Further, "pressure is brought to bear on people to come to college rather than to bring college services to the people. The lone student shut-in or living in more remote parts...is hard-pressed to make the case for equality of opportunity...."[5]

This last observation may also apply to the nature of rural education itself. Such is unquestionably true of its high school component, so crucial as the preparatory phase for university, and, increasingly, college entrance. From goals established by the Small Secondary School Project one sees that many believe elective programs either cannot meet rural high school students' needs or cannot be offered at all on account of low demand. When such programs are offered, moreover, examination results are not always comparable with those achieved in larger centres. Other deficiencies come in for scrutiny. Intellectual development, including critical analysis and independent, self-directed study, are identified as having too low a priority at present in small high schools. Vocational education also is rarely possible on anywhere near the level available in larger towns or cities. The Task Force on Small School Districts[6] (TFSSD) adds more general characteristics of the often-rural area which work against its educational proficiency. School administrators, they say, are not infrequently pressed for available time and not always trained for executive work, particularly negotiations and crisis management. Learning resources tend to be uncoordinated. Students command insufficient funds for school related travel. Work experience and career preparation programs are at times inadequate. Buildings are aging and buses unreliable. In short, concluded TFSSD, "students in small school districts do not receive the same level of educational services or opportunities as those in larger districts."

Other indices of rural inequalities are at hand, though they need to be used with due care. One is school attendance.

Attendance as a Percentage of Total Possible by School Type*†

	Province	*Low*	*High*
All Schools	94.14%	91.11% *(Nisgha)* *(523)*	94.98% *(South Okanagan)* *(2,408)*
Elementary	95.09	91.75 *(Gulf Isl)* *(1,334)*	95.90 *(Delta)* *(17,426)*
Junior Sec. *(Grades 8-10)*	93.19	82.97 *(Courtenay)* *(7,167)*	97.20 *(Quesnel)* *(5,291)*
Jr. Sr. Sec. *(Grades 8-12)*	92.65	90.07 *(Van Isl N)* *(2,935)*	95.81 *(Qualicum)* *(3,543)*
Senior Sec. *(Grades 11-12)*	92.19	89.70 *(Cariboo-Chilcotin)* *(8,318)*	95.63 *(Castlegar)* *(2,204)*

* Source: Ministry of Education, Form 1502, June 30, 1987.
† Numbers in parentheses indicate students enrolled.

Granted, the precise relationship between attendance and personal or institutional achievement remains to be demonstrated. If among other factors, however, low attendance can be associated with inclement weather, ill health, perceived hazards, indifference, or low school-community morale, then it merits attention. Compared with historical data (e.g., 55.93% in 1873; 82.16% in 1922; 90.43% in 1971) today's provincial attendance level of 94.14% appears promising.

The preceding table indicates the variations among types of school organization. Note that only one district (Nisgha) satisfies the TFSSD definition of a small school district and that Delta is by no means the largest, being eighth in size behind Vancouver, Surrey, Victoria, Coquitlam, Prince George, Richmond, and Burnaby. As is readily apparent, too, there is no neat large district/small district explanation which accounts for these variations, though the table does confirm that in the case of all schools, of elementary schools, and of junior-senior secondary schools, the low district is in

fact smaller than the high one. In the case of junior secondary schools, the reverse is true to a noticeable extent and in that of senior secondary schools to a much wider degree, in the latter instance no doubt a function of Williams Lake being the centre of an otherwise widely dispersed district. Such data cannot serve as conclusive evidence that lower attendance and smaller districts necessarily coincide, but they do indicate a need for further analysis. This is necessary to determine why, at 94.14% overall daily attendance, some 28,649 students[7] should be out of school on a given day, and whether that absence is within the province's power or best interests to rectify.

Another indicator of inequality is student withdrawal. The Ministry of Education defines those who withdraw as students who cease to attend any public school in B.C. between September 30 and June 30 of the same school year. Withdrawals are not to be confused with dropouts for whom meaningful figures are hard to obtain. Beyond this, a reason for turning to withdrawals is that they are seen not as discontinuance of schooling but rather as serious interruptions—for students who lose momentum before re-entry at a later date in a different location; for teachers who must attempt to help them regain that momentum; and for school districts who may as a result face midyear reduction in allocations leading at times to corresponding staffing cuts. The problem is not small. In a given year, nearly everyone is in place in September but 7.27% (at present some 35,542 students) are lost before June 30. As the following table shows,[8] the withdrawal factor proves especially hard on two very small and one relatively small districts.[9]

Withdrawals by Level of Schooling and by District

	Province	*Low*	*High*
Elementary	0.97%	0 % *(4 districts)*	2.98% *(Kimberley)*
Grade 8	2.83	0 *(7 districts)*	11.63 *(Nisgha)*
Grade 9	4.70	0 *(2 districts)*	24.24 *(Central Coast)*
Grade 10	8.24	1.03 *(Kimberley)*	23.88 *(Nisgha)*
Grade 11	9.79	2.5 *(Windermere)*	23.14 *(Central Coast)*
Grade 12	8.95	0 *(4 districts)*	37.14 *(Nisgha)*
Grades 8-12	7.27	1.77 *(Kimberley)*	2.146 *(Nisgha)*
District	3.47	1.17 *(Kettle Valley)*	8.94 *(Nisgha)*

The logical complement of attendance and withdrawal data are graduation figures. Since the 1964-65 school year, Grade 12 graduates province-wide have increased from 68.9% of the June or September school enrolment (13,951 students) to 73.1% of that enrolment figure for 1985-86 (25,376 students) with small fluctuations along the way. In 1986-87, graduation rates varied from a low of 31.43% (Nisgha) to a high of 101.92% (Windermere). These figures do little, however, to explain the range of Grade 12 completion in terms either of size or ruralism. To illustrate,[10] Vancouver at 71.67%, Coquitlam at 71.13%, Prince George at 71.05%, Courtenay at 71.62%, and Terrace at 71.09% represent sizes between 50,800 and 5,240 and varying degrees of ruralism, yet evince virtually identical graduation rates close to the provincial average of 71.01%. By the same token, those districts which in ascending order reflect with Nisgha the six lowest provincial graduation rates for 1986-87 include Summerland (57.24%), Peace River South (58.66%), Greater Victoria (59.73%), New Westminster (60.00%), and Burnaby (60.19%).

Inconclusive though these figures may be, when read in conjunction with certain other indicators related to special services and programs, the perceived problem of rural inequality assumes a somewhat more substantial mien. Admittedly, calculations of administrators per 1,000 pupils show certain peculiarities in favour of small districts, Kettle Valley ranking first with 3.11 followed by Windermere with 2.93, Arrow Lakes with 2.92, Stikine with 2.72, and Peace River North with 2.29. By contrast, Vancouver stands 41st with 1.69, Delta 58th with 1.60, Burnaby 64th with 1.56, Surrey 66th with 1.54, and Coquitlam 74th with 1.02. The same index for counsellors, though, shows 46 districts with fewer than one counsellor per 1,000 students, districts of medium size or less, Prince George, Abbotsford, and Victoria

excepted. And though it must be noted that in this respect Nisgha ranks first at 0.88 (a function of its small size), it is followed by New Westminster at 0.85, Qualicum at 0.74, South Cariboo (another small district) with 0.70, Burnaby with 0.64, Creston-Kaslo at 0.55, Surrey at 0.45, Maple Ridge at 0.42, Vernon at 0.35, and Agassiz-Harrison at 0.24, districts representative of or closer to larger centres. Other variations appear in selected districts with enrolments ranging from less than one thousand to over fifty thousand. For instance, 20.8% of Vancouver's Grades 11 and 12 enrolment undertakes a career preparation program, 14.3% of Abbotsford's, and 12.3% of Victoria's. Terrace, Cranbrook, Grand Forks, and Princeton, on the other hand, show zero enrolment under this category. Thirteen point one per cent of Coquitlam's K-7 students follow French Immersion, Campbell River 8.1%, and Victoria 7.2%. Conversely, Cranbrook, Trail, Kimberley, Grand Forks, and Princeton show no enrollment and Prince George 0.1%. Four point nine per cent of Coquitlam's Grades 8 to 12 enrolment takes Secondary French Immersion with Victoria, Vernon, and Vancouver showing 1.8%, 1.5%, and 1.3% respectively. Prince George, Abbotsford, Terrace, Cranbrook, Trail, Kimberley, Grand Forks, and Princeton show zero enrolment. English as a Second Language is offered in proportion to far more students in Vancouver (19.8% of K-12 enrolment) than elsewhere. At 2.3% of its K-12 group, Victoria leads in teaching the severely learning disabled, followed by Coquitlam, Kimberley, and Grand Forks at 2.0% each. Grand Forks leads in rehabilitation programs at 4.0% of its Grades 8 to 12 enrolment, followed by Victoria, Prince George, and Terrace at 2.7%, 1.5%, and 2.3% respectively. And Terrace leads the province in Indian Education at 14.4% of Grades 8 to 12 enrolment followed by Campbell River, Kamloops, Victoria, and Vancouver at 7.7%, 4.6%, 3.6%, and 2.8% respectively. There are dangers in statistics such as these, related to their incompleteness, selective use, singularity of variables, and ever-present possibility that low level of participation in particular offerings may constitute lack of demand rather than lack of resources. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence exists to bear out many of those perceived inequities expressed in rural areas, at least to the extent that many educational services are available in direct proportion (though, again, not exclusively) to one's proximity to the provincial population centres.

Dimensions of the Issue

Before turning to recommendations, the research group should comment on five facets of the rural inequality issue thus far alluded to, which have featured largely in research deliberations over the past year.

First, albeit a caricature, Maxwell A. Cameron's *aperçu* about nature's irritating disregard for educational administration is constructive. Among other things, it obliges British Columbians to reconsider certain fundamental realities about the true dimensions of education as a total civilizing experience which an eminent writer, with conceptual generosity, once defined as "not only...formal pedagogy but...the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations...."[11] This is to say that schools are part of education, along with families, churches, unions, cultural associations, libraries, museums, political parties, and scores of other human institutions. It is also to suggest that in any given location these educational components perforce occur differently and to uneven degrees and that attempts to standardize particular combinations throughout the province as mere imitative reactions would in some respects be counter-educational, denying as they would a given community's way of life. In other words, rural residence with its own peculiar advantages of intimate neighbourhood and natural attractiveness is an educational opportunity in itself. Some will choose it as a life commitment. Some will bear with it for a time—experimentally or as a calculated if short-term professional chance. Some will view it with pleasure only as a periodic recreational resource. And some—quintessential urbanophiles—will avoid it at all costs. The research group thinks that insofar as they affect rural education, these differing preferences regarding the rural educational experience are occasion not for lament but for acknowledgement.

Second, the problem of teacher turnover in the rural setting is a matter of utmost concern. For one thing, children are adversely affected. It takes several years for teachers to become acquainted with the life of a particular school—especially a small rural school where the very proximity of community affairs makes thorough understanding of children in all aspects of their developing years that much more critical. For another thing, schools suffer. Their philosophies, curricular and extracurricular offerings, timetables, budgets, and relations with their supporting communities assume a perpetual tentativeness born of not knowing with any great certainty who at some point in the future will be around to run the show. Then, too, communities are troubled. Teachers have traditionally played a distinguished part in local affairs, sometimes making their teaching discipline more widely available than its regular school context, at other times engaging in committee work and assuming leadership roles in vital community endeavours not directly related to

schools. Yet their comparatively frequent arrival in and departure from rural settlements, though perhaps understandable in a profession with traditionally nomadic tendencies, is sometimes perceived as the cause of critical discontinuities in community projects. In the normal course of events, such short-term contributions are suitably appreciated. But when lack of such participation is viewed (not always accurately, one might add) as career ambition at the expense of a community, no good purpose can be served.

Third, access to post-secondary education is of highest priority for any province purporting to believe in lifelong education as the hallmark of an informed, free, democratic society. This is the case because universities and colleges are resources of enormous social important; as such, according to what a noted philosopher calls distributive justice, they are resources properly accessible to all. A further reason reinforces our opinion. As an experienced critic reminds us, raising the question of post-secondary education brings up the related question of its articulation with other parts of the education system. Citing *The Economist*,[13] he tells of a review of educational effectiveness in Europe, Asia, and North America which identifies as primary indicators "the percentage of youth who completed a high school diploma, *and* the percentage of young adults (18-24) involved in some form of advanced education or training in preparation for work." Such a perspective in effect uses post-secondary access as a compelling measure of the success secondary education enjoys. It raises questions about secondary school retention rates, why students do not graduate, and, among many variables, what part the secondary curriculum plays in non-graduation. It suggests the crucial need for very close cooperation between colleges and secondary schools on a variety of issues including counselling; advanced placement; pre-vocational, apprenticeship, and technical courses; and adult basic education, as well as similarly close association between secondary school counsellors and parents regarding the educational futures of children. And overall, it testifies to the benefits of a "fully comprehensive and integrated educational system, extending from pre-school to post-retirement...."

Fourth, despite existing educational policies and school support formulae expressing government intention to provide equal educational opportunities, rural areas consistently exhibit apparent inequalities. Moreover, we note that appeals for special government consideration of particular rural educational requirements are thought by many to be met with bureaucratic insensitivity and neglect. An example is the use of pro-rated provincial averages as the maximum support level for special needs.[14] These and similar complaints appear widespread, understandable, and legitimate. At the same time, considerable variation occurs among the character and performance of rural schools themselves. Low morale, for example, appears at times to be related to the perception of things like teacher turnover, parental apathy, or limited curricula as *inevitable* consequences of isolation, surmountable *only* through increased government funding and decreased government "interference." It may well be that other factors, including uncertainties among trustees, administrators, teachers, and parents in the challenges of educational planning and resource acquisition in complex systems, also relate to those feelings of frustration expressed in some, though by no means all, rural districts. Accordingly, and without prejudice to correcting instances of actual government neglect, we stress the importance of local leadership and leadership training for all involved in the educational process, with special reference to the rural scene.

Fifth, the record shows many calls for further decentralized post-secondary (including university) facilities as remedies for such disparate ills as rural teacher turnover, excessive personal educational expenses, and "culture shock" of students away from family home and community. These are very reasonable suggestions. To be weighed in the balance, though, are the costs and relative effectiveness of developing further provincial universities as opposed to the traditional and in some senses more practical view: that life on campus in a major city can be an education in itself and that it is the proper task of families, schools, communities and government to prepare and assist young people to pursue higher studies at established institutions.

Suggestions

In light of the foregoing discussion, the research group suggests:

1. that insomuch as evidence abounds that children and young adults in rural areas appear less aware of post-secondary opportunities than their urban counterparts, universities, colleges, and technical institutions go out of their way to acquaint rural schools with their entrance requirements and programs with particular attention to the matter of transfer credit;

2. that the Ministry of Education carry out a searching review of the real cost of various modes of post-secondary education including travel, subsistence, health insurance, and related items, and that this information, together with a catalogue of available financial assistance, be made available in provincial high schools for use by students, teachers, and parents;

3. that new initiatives be launched to encourage small schools to enjoy the advantages of distance education recently made possible by the introduction of new technologies.

References

1. F. Henry Johnson, *A History of Public Education in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Publications Centre, UBC, 1964), p.126.

2. The research group also noted wide ranges of teacher turnover elsewhere. For instance, averages for the three most recent years showed District 35 (Langley) at 3% District 60 (Peace River North) at 6%, District 81 (Fort Nelson) at 16%, and District 87 (Stikine) at 22%.

3. Arnold Boomhower, in a brief presented to the Commission.

4. John D. Dennison and Paul Gallagher, *Canada's Community Colleges* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), p.163.

5. *Ibid.*, p.165.

6. For the purpose of their study, this group defined as a "small school district" one which has a student enrolment of 1,200 or less. There are 17 such districts in the Province.

7. This figure is 5.86% of 488,888 students, the sum of pupils by district as shown in Ministry of Education, *Contacts in Education 1987/88* (Victoria: Information Services, Ministry of Education, 1988), pp 5-24.

8. Further study is required, since among larger districts there occur variations which cannot be accounted for by size or degree of ruralism. Compare withdrawals from secondary grades in Langley (5.42%), Abbotsford (7.27%), and Chilliwack (11.31%); or Burnaby (4.56%). Vancouver (5.46%), North Vancouver (6.43%), Richmond (8.41%), and New Westminster (12.29%).

9. Nisgha with 523 students, Central Coast with 369, and Kimberley with 1,658. Clearly, some of the extreme percentages in this table are functions of small numbers and non-representative circumstances.

10. Ministry of Education data throughout.

11. Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (New York: Vintage, 1960), p.14.

12. Jerrold R. Coombs.

13. "Training for Work," *The Economist*, December 20, 1986, pp 93-101.

14. Witness a rural district with 82 pupils in need of special education funding which was "capped" at the 36-pupil level of assistance. "What," asked a concerned teacher, "are we to do to help the other 46?"

4. The Changing Character of Society and Implications for Schooling

In the course of the inquiry, many British Columbians reminisced about earlier times. The elderly could reach back to the country's second decade. They and their children could reflect on the Great Depression. And they, their children, and their grandchildren could recall the relative abundance of the '60s. Anecdotes about growing up in the province and going to school naturally loomed large. Recollections of family, work, leisure, and aging told of a social past steadily eroded over three generations.

Yesterday's Families

Here are the broad strokes of those recollections. The family consisted of mother, father, and three or more children. Parents had married following a period of courtship extended sometimes by the perceived need to save money for a house and furniture, train for a job, emigrate from a foreign land, or satisfy parental conditions. Marriages generally endured; divorce or separation was considered cause for reproach. Domestic life featured a division of effort. Women cared for children, cooked, shopped, and cleaned up. Men did accounts, performed the more strenuous chores, transacted business, and disciplined children.

Work patterns were similarly divided. Men went to work. Women stayed at home. Going to work (when there *was* work, of course) was ritualistic as to timing and accoutrements: a matter of rising and leaving at a set time with lunch bucket or briefcase following a long-rehearsed farewell, week in, week out, throughout the years. Going to school was not dissimilar, a form of apprenticeship in working adulthood, books and lunch bag in hand, leaving behind a suddenly quietened house and its mother to a few minutes of reflection before the day's maintenance jobs. Punctuality in arriving at work was not only a condition of employment but also a mark of self-respect in a labour-intensive resource-based economy. And whereas economic conditions and a North American disposition for taking risks to get ahead could mean a man might move upon occasion from this job to that, a strong inclination to follow a single calling was abetted by caveats about being a jack of all trades and master of none. Meanwhile, when work in sales, mining exploration, railroad building, logging, or commercial fishing demanded a man's absence over protracted periods, women added to their responsibilities accounting, strenuous chores, family business, and child discipline; they cared for the children and kept the home fires burning.

For pioneer families, leisure time was scarce indeed, and not always easy to identify in that adults often consumed it in some productive pastime such as knitting or growing a vegetable garden. During times when ten-hour days, six-day weeks, and 49-week years characterized working lives, there was little enough chance to do much of anything that could not be classified as work. Work, in fact, drove the entire social machinery. With reduced working hours, electric lighting, daylight saving time, and the advent of radios, however, leisure became a family affair, the radio replacing the hearth or stove as a major centre of domestic attention. Children were not always at leisure indoors, to be sure. They enjoyed what a leading scholar[1] has called "the culture of childhood"—learning to do things from other children as well as "learning how to behave towards each other" and absorbing "the knowledge, customs, expectations, beliefs, norms, values, and social roles that governed relationships between them." But they were at the beck and call of parents, literally. Mothers[2] calling children home for supper was a normal and not unpleasant sound; it was even known that children's given names were selected not just for their beauty but for their acoustic potential as well!

Aging was a similarly family-centred phenomenon. Older people often lived in or near their children's and grandchildren's dwellings and were recognized as useful teachers and caretakers of the young, surrogates in time of family sickness, and authorities on community history and custom. They were usually visible, functional parts of family and community existence playing active roles in a society which did not subdivide its social experiences by age to

quite the extent that a later order felt necessary. We are describing, in short, a past driven by a work ethic whose practitioners invested their working lives in the dependence of their growing children or their declining parents and of their communities' social prosperity.

Today's Families

It is hard to believe that a past thus remembered should constitute in today's world such a caricature—an almost fictional setting for sentimentality. Yet its erosion has proved so imperceptible that even today, parents and others with a stake in education seem to mourn its passing in the demands they make upon youth to conform to traditional codes of behaviour which contemporary society appears to thwart at every turn. How, then, has society thus transformed itself that growing up should entail so lonely and unpredictable an experience for so many young people?

In a trenchant review, *Becoming Adult in a Changing Society*, eminent social analysts[3] shed some light on member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[4] Families, they argue, have altered in structure and function through three identifiable and gradually changing phases. The first of these, at or slightly above subsistence level, saw necessity in the labour of children, was inwardly focussed, and on account of marginal economies, envisaged the school as a necessary but—for older children—disruptive invasion of family affairs. The second phase, styled "post-agricultural, urban, industrial," no longer required child labour for economic survival and was often hard pressed to find productive work for children to do. In phase two, families were smaller and parental investment in the futures of fewer children correspondingly intense, including their education, marriages, and careers. No longer aloof to formal schooling past the bare minimum, families in phase two saw the school as "a principal avenue by which the family [could]...achieve, through its children, status mobility in the next generation." Accordingly, family and school combined to "guide youth into adulthood." The third phase, an advanced industrial or post-industrial society, saw family influences diminish in several respects. Industrial, commercial, and government corporate bodies had usurped family importance as central to economic and to some extent social existence. Families could be described less accurately as continuously linked institutions "spanning generations," and more as discrete entities re-forming with each generation. Family interest in children declined, and with it the stability of marriages. States assumed "many of the welfare and redistributional activities once performed by the family."

Parallel with these changes in the family, says this analysis, are changes in work patterns, use of leisure time, and aging. Teenage unemployment is on the rise. Internationalization of trade and commerce has put youth in competition not just with adult workers at home but with workers abroad too. Educational achievement is becoming an increasingly important criterion for job entry in a variety of occupations once open to healthy candidates willing to work hard. The "organizational context" of work has also changed. Work has been "formalized" and youth once introduced to it via the family finds entry hard to the extent that families distance themselves from the workplace. Employment benefits have grown to be "fixed costs" unrelated to productivity resulting in employers' reluctance to bring on board inexperienced beginners. And such part-time jobs as food preparation vacated by women moving into the paid labour force and available to teenagers are mostly dead ends in terms of permanency and advancement. Leisure time is less and less spent in the family, with parents and children together. Rather it is spent in "age-segregated settings: cocktail parties and work-related gatherings for the adults, rock concerts and sports for the youth." Meanwhile, aging is more and more a private affair. Elderly grandparents no longer live with their children or grandchildren,[5] thus denying youth the wisdom once readily available but today, from a youthful standpoint, perhaps of questionable relevance in any case. Indeed, as the aging themselves contend for pension, medical care, and adult education resources in a curious way they have become to their juniors a form of unanticipated competitive concern, not the least reason for which is their mounting longevity.

Some Provincial Statistics

The above account of societal changes in OECD countries cuts a wide swath, to be sure. Some British Columbians protest that the trends it so dramatically describes do not fit their own experience, particularly regarding what could

be called family solidarity and the introduction of youth to the world of work. Conversely, Statistics Canada data verify important social shifts over time.

(1) Families

The number of private households in British Columbia increased 9.1% between 1981 and 1986, a rate much reduced from 20.3% over the previous five years. The average number of persons per household has decreased from 3.4 in 1961 to 2.6 in 1986 reflecting a similar trend nationally with averages of 3.7 and 2.8 in 1961 and 1986 respectively. The total number of families increased 31.6% from 1971 to 1986 while the total number of people in families increased only 26.6% over the same period, reflecting decreasing family size from 3.5 persons in 1971 to 3.0 persons in 1986, a reduction slightly smaller than the national figure. Over the same period, the total number of people not in families increased by 84.4%, consistent with Canada-wide trends. Lone parenting is on the increase. Between 1981 and 1986, lone-parent families increased 22.8% compared with only 4.7% for husband-and-wife families. Childless families are likewise increasing—8.6% from 1981 to 1986 as opposed to 5.5% for families with children.

Several other family-related facts are of interest. The number of out-of-wedlock births increased from 14,000 in 1951 to 59,000 in 1985, representing an increase in the proportion of live births that were out-of-wedlock births from less than 4% in 1951 to more than 16% in 1986. Though marriage is still a popular institution, rates have dropped from 9.8 per 1,000 population in 1950 to 7.7 in 1985. Between 1950 and 1985, the average age at marriage has increased slightly for both grooms and brides, from 30.6 and 27.2 years respectively in 1950 to 31.6 and 28.6 years respectively in 1985. Divorce rates increased substantially from 240.2 per 100,000 population in 1970 to 358.5 in 1980, then decreased to 288.0 in 1985. In 1981, just over 11% of all unmarried persons 15 years of age and older were living in common-law unions, a figure which had increased 13% by 1986, at which time 8.5% of all couples lived common-law. To summarize, British Columbia families appear much changed. They are having fewer children; more people are living alone; single-parent families are on the increase, as are childless families; marriage rates are down and marriage somewhat delayed; out-of-wedlock births are up; divorce rates show net increase; and common-law relationships are more usual. As for the family as principal agent of financial security, state welfare, health, pension, compensation, and unemployment insurance schemes are so deeply entrenched as to have reduced its welfare function to the incidental in many respects.

(2) Work

Though reliable historical figures are hard to obtain, certain fairly current data illustrate some of the realities facing young people here as they confront the world of work. For example, the increasing difficulty of joining the labour force with minimal educational qualifications can be seen from the following tabulation.

Labour Force by Level of Education (B.C.)

Level of Education	*% labour force, 1976*	*% labour force, 1986*
0 - 8 years	11.9	6.4
Some high school	53.9	53.4
Some post-secondary	11.9	13.9
Post-secondary certificate or diploma	12.3	12.3
University degree	10.0	14.0

As another index of the same problem facing the young, unemployment continues to be most pronounced among young adults. To illustrate, in Greater Vancouver in February 1987, unemployment rates decreased according to age as follows (next page).

Unemployment Rates, Greater Vancouver

Age	February 1987 % unemployment
Under age 25	23
25 - 44 years	13
45 - 54 years	10

When cross referred with education, the situation becomes more illuminating still.

1986 B.C. Unemployment Rate by Age and Education[6]

Level of education	Age 15 - 24	25 - 54
Grades 0 - 8	32.7%	17.5%
High school	22.3	12.6
Some post-secondary	13.2	9.9
Certificate/Diploma	13.3	8.7
Degree	NA	6.3

It should be said, however, that contrary to the OECD findings, part-time employment in B.C. increased over the past several years, between 1980 and 1985 by 34,000 as opposed to a full-time employment decrease of 19,000. In this connection, though, 17% in 1980 and 38% in 1985 were involuntarily employed part time. "Economic uncertainty made employers reluctant to commit themselves to hiring full-time workers, and part-time workers cost less,"[7] particularly as they did not qualify for certain benefits and were easily terminated. Involuntary part-time employment is currently decreasing. Changes in the workplace itself are also affecting youth entry into steady occupations. Observers have noted a trend toward "a broader range of skills and competencies" as increasingly essential, a marketable potential virtually impossible for beginners. Also problematic could be a work force with "ability to change, to learn new skills, to be self-motivating, and to find their own paths in a lively and unpredictable environment."[8] Undoubtedly some of our young people fortunate enough to enter such a work force would prevail on the strength of attitudes learned in *some* homes and *some* schools. Depending on these variables, though, the process would perforce prove highly selective, unlike the single-function orientation of recruits in the manufactories and resource industries of their parents and grandparents. Internationalization of trade may not be such a large factor in B.C. youth employment as is indicated in OECD data since B.C. secondary manufacturing has been less internationally competitive than Canada's as a whole. What is apparent, though, is a decided provincial decline in employment figures for export industries which in earlier boom days traditionally signed up young, unskilled labour. The following table makes this point as well as another: namely, that growth has taken place in service occupations—more recently, "advanced" and "producer"[9] service occupations which, again, would look to experienced, highly skilled workers to satisfy their recruiting needs.

Employment by Industry in B.C.

	1979	1986	Change
Agriculture	22,500	31,000	8,500
Primary resources	56,000	50,400	-5,600
Manufacturing	178,500	151,400	-27,100
Construction	76,200	68,800	-7,300
Transportation	117,600	117,100	-500
Trade	210,100	239,800	29,700
Finance, Insurance & real estate	66,300	83,000	16,800
Community, business & personal services	341,400	450,000	108,600
Public administration	76,300	82,700	6,400
Total	1,144,800	1,274,300	129,500

Source: B.C. Central Credit Union Economic Analysis. March 1987.

Internationalization of trade and part-time employment aside, the problems youth face in starting to earn a living in British Columbia are not dissimilar to those encountered by OECD counterparts.

(3) Leisure

The way British Columbians use their leisure time in certain respects supports the OECD findings. To begin with, their attitudes toward recreation are seen by others[10] as so prominent a part of life as to surpass their pride in performance at work. This predilection for leisure activities is reinforced both by a climate accommodating a very wide variety of summer and winter sports and by a European and American tradition of organized amateur and professional athletics. Other indices testify to the importance of leisure as a provincial priority. British Columbia spends more on recreation than the national average. Its 1983 library book circulation of 9.33 books per capita per year topped the Ontario (7.34) and Canadian (6.22) averages. Its average circulation per issue of daily newspapers in 1984 stood at 212 per 1,000 population, similar to the national average; but the same measure for non-daily newspapers was 886, greater than both the Canadian average (618) and the Ontario average (615). In 1985, it had the highest incidence of cable TV with over 80% of all households subscribing compared with 62% nationally and 68% in Ontario. Average attendance at musical performances (996) was similar to Canadians in general (976) and greater than Ontarians (857) in 1982. In 1984, B.C. had more movie theatres (4.6 per 100,000 population) than Ontario (4.0) and slightly more than the national average (4.4). Attendance at movies (3.5 times per year) was the same as Ontario and more than Canadians in general (2.9).

Any doubt as to further enthusiasm for spare-time, weekend, and vacation leisure occupations can be removed by witnessing the frequency and intensity of fishing, boating, skiing, hiking, camping, motor touring, hunting, racquet sports, gardening, and social gatherings that characterize the Beautiful British Columbia scene year round. As a prominent researcher[11] has concluded from both national and provincial data, though, this leisure activity stratifies along age lines and for two reasons tends to separate children from their parents and from other adults. "Quite naturally," he says, "children try to maximize their own control" over their spare time. Parents anxious over the risk of mischief, however, also try to structure their children's leisure hours. Two types of activities result. One is that of children who "want to play, to read, to listen to the radio, to watch television, to talk with their friends, stroll through the malls and otherwise join in indoor and outdoor games and pastimes that they themselves organize." The other, especially true of preschool and elementary school children, are the church activities, music and dancing lessons, or adult-run but child-paced sports leagues, workshops, summer camps, and similar enterprises collectively established "so that...children can fill the whole of the year with practices and competitions of various sorts." To the extent that parents have secured increasing influence over young children's time, though, children may have gained ground—in *their* terms—on reaching adolescence; this raises the question as to "whether there is a connection between these two trends" with adolescents "successfully fighting to free themselves from the overly-tight constraints which governed their years of relative or complete powerlessness."

Beyond the normal socializing of adolescence with its peculiar language, aloofness, and tastes in dress and music, parents justifiably worry over what dangers can beset adolescent social independence devoid of experience. A sobering reminder is the level of crime, as the following table shows.

Crime Rates in B.C. and Nation-Wide in 1986

Offences	*Canada* *Rate/ 100,000 pop.*	*% by youth offenders*	*B.C.* *Rate/ 100,000 pop.*	*% by youth offenders*
Crimes of violence	801	7.2	1,254	6.0
Property crimes	5,660	8.0	8,641	7.3
Total criminal code	8,901	7.6	13,816	6.7
Total drugs	220	8.5	409	9.7
Total all offences	11,169	7.5	16,093	7.5

As can be seen, British Columbia has a crime rate per 100,000 population almost 50% greater than the nation-wide rate in all categories. Crimes committed by youth were similar to or slightly lower than nation-wide proportions. The one exception—drug offences—is a source of widespread provincial concern.

When taken together, these disparate indicators of leisure activity say several important things. They say that British Columbia is a leisure-driven society, a fact that children no doubt learn early in their lives. They say that although many families structure their children's spare time, leisure time overall is prone to age-based segregation. They say that the parental role model a young person is most likely to observe is a domestic or leisure-time model rather than a working one. And they say that wherever the criminal intrudes into the culture of childhood, children are seriously at risk.

(4) Aging

Aging in British Columbia has undergone some dramatic changes. Perhaps most striking is the increase in life expectancy, as the following table indicates.

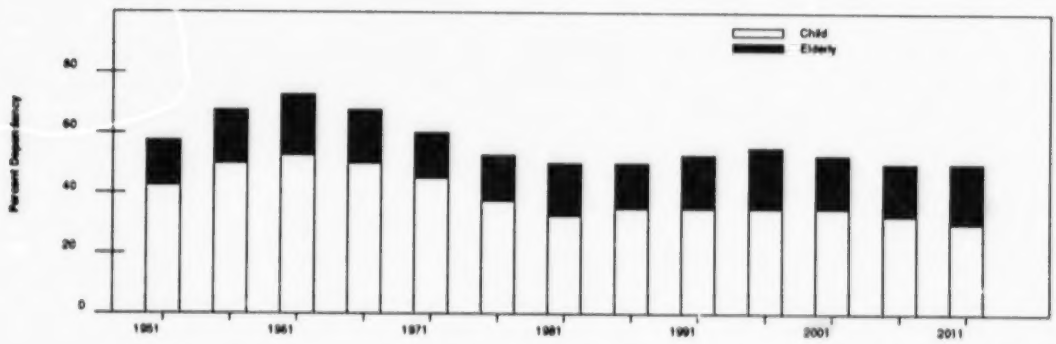
British Columbia Life Expectancy at Age 0

Time period	*Male (years)*	*Avg. Annual Change (years)*	*Female (years)*	*Avg. Annual Change (years)*
1930-32	62.2	-	65.3	-
1940-42	63.0	0.08	66.3	0.10
1950-52	66.7	0.37	72.4	0.61
1960-62	68.9	0.22	75.4	0.30
1970-72	69.3	0.04	76.4	0.10
1980-82	72.6	0.33	79.6	0.32
1985-86	74.2	0.32	80.6	0.20

Sources: Statistics Canada, *Life Expectancy Trends, 1930/32-1960/62*; Statistics Canada, *Life Tables, Canada and the Provinces; Central Statistics Bureau*.

The trend is expected to continue although at a slower rate, reaching 75.9 years for males and 82.6 years for females by 2011. Yet more spectacular is the changing pattern of dependency ratios as rendered in the graph which follows.

British Columbia Dependency Ratios[13]



Dependency ratios are defined as "the proportion of population 0-14 and 65+ respectively, to the population aged 15-64. In effect, crude comparisons of the population who are 'dependent' by virtue of age with the potentially 'economically active' are made," signifying changes in population structure which could have "significant impacts on the labour force and economy."[12] Note that the child dependency ratio has declined since 1962 largely because of the

falling fertility rate. It reached an approximate level of 30.4 children per 100 persons of working age in 1986 and is expected to peak again at about 30.9 in 1993. Elderly dependency is expected to rise further, to a level of 21.1 by 1998, as growth in the elderly population continues to outstrip that of the working age population. The total dependency ratio (children plus elderly) reached a low of 47.6 "dependents" per 100 "active" persons in 1982 and is expected to increase to a high of 51.7 by 1996 then drop back to 48.9 by 2009. Anticipated is a significant redistribution of the source of the dependency burden from the younger to the older populations, which in a sense places the elderly in competition with children for social, recreational, health, and educational services.

Review

There appears to be a close parallel between certain major social changes described as affecting OECD countries in recent years and similar changes taking place in British Columbia and influencing the lives of children and of the schools they attend or will go to in the future. Disruptive forces have transformed the family from a predictable social unit, which ideally provided children not just with the means of growth and subsistence but as well with the confidence to participate in future social existence and particularly in work, to a more fragile institution—one that is, from a child's standpoint, at once unpredictable and withdrawn.

Similar forces have radically altered both the nature of work and youth's entry into it. Not only is education in general increasingly critical as an instrument of first employment. The kind of education children receive will also have a direct bearing on their ultimate success in the workplace as the nature of work swings from resource exploitation and primary manufacturing to advanced and producer services and the technologically sophisticated data and communications systems upon which they depend. Leisure, once the sum of sporadic interstices punctuating a full, strenuous working week, occupies more uninterrupted time than ever before. Advertisements to the contrary, it rarely gives rise to "fun for the whole family"; in fact, it separates adolescent and adult in the recreational context, thereby obstructing a traditional bridge across the generations. Aging, moreover, takes place more and more removed from children, and in such a way as to place longer-term and more varied demands on society's resources. The question is how have schools coped with these fundamental and profound social changes, what problems remain to be solved, and how might schools be conducted in the future to cope with their continuing development?

Provincial Responses

Much is expected of the schools in response to the realities of contemporary family life. At public meetings, a frequent introductory comment to an appeal for educational improvement was "I am a single parent." What followed was often a proposal for how a school might recognize this fact through pre-school or kindergarten classes, lunch programs, after-school events, busing, or counselling in general conduct, health, school programming, or career futures. In schools, the same sorts of observations obtained. Faced with not just significant numbers of children from lone-parent, poor, or otherwise hard-pressed families, but also with the wide range of their cumulative "family" needs, including parental interviews, teachers tended to stress the pedagogical repercussions of performing *in loco parentis* many functions once solidly within the parental domain. Experienced teachers with long memories in fact declared that children were not always "ready" for school in that their modes of behaviour, self-sufficiency, attitudes toward their work, and general well-being stood in the way of their academic progress. Students themselves also expressed the necessity of understanding their transitional status between family and school. Briefs from student assemblies in northern and rural secondary schools called for school study halls to counteract lack of study facilities at home; an "umbrella" course in parenting, sex education, AIDS, and consumer skills; course, personal, and career counselling; a balance of men and women physical education teachers; better classroom control and discipline; counselling for suicidal teenagers; peer-group counselling; schools and their libraries to be open before, during, and after hours; places for students to sit during lunch and recess; better supervision in cafeterias; covers at all bus stops; and transportation to school for all little children.

Though not so evident as their family-related functions, the schools' responses to changing patterns of work also aroused interest. There was evidence, in fact, that as families had to a marked degree relinquished to the schools preparation of young people for work, a perception existed that the schools in turn had experienced difficulties in picking up the

slack. A labour leader[14] put the matter succinctly, suggesting "that organized labour is the constituency least well served by the existing system of public education." No textbooks, he said, were available for "preparing young people to be part of the organized labour force." Furthermore, "the required sense of vision, or purpose; or philosophy of preparing young people to adapt to change in the working world is missing." Other briefs referred to the need for school work experience programs, a curriculum that drew the human experience of work closer to student imagination, and the practical integrity of vocational courses such as Basic and Truck Logging, Preventative Maintenance, and Forest Management. At public hearings, speakers reported how much career education, work experience, and occupational instruction were valued and how problems of funding and insurance hampered their delivery.

Parents, teachers, and business people reminded listeners that whereas the "top" 40% of students had at least some prospect of going on to university, the high school curriculum had very little to attract the remaining 60%. One youth asked how young people could find a promising entry into the work force when doing so required post-secondary education but to afford it they needed a job first! More pointedly, the question was raised as to why so little respect is shown in the system for those students who work best with "hand, eye, and brain." And students themselves endorsed work-study programs, in one instance calling for a full-time job experience coordinator to locate and help utilize opportunities in a relatively small community. This is not to say, though, that the responsibilities of schools, on behalf of parents, to introduce youth to the workplace were unexaminable. On the contrary. Several parents took the view that it was not the office of schools to train students to "slip easily into jobs." What schools should do, they said, was render students trainable by business and industry by training them in skills, showing them how these skills "fit together," and teaching them "how to think." It must be added that little reference was made throughout to the so-called hidden curriculum of schooling emphasized in the OECD study. In a very real sense, despite their formal work-orientation efforts, schools can inadvertently work *against* sound preparation for the job market. First, most schooling today is less demanding[15] than most work in such things as sustained effort, tardiness, absence, and hours. Second, in broadening horizons, schooling can also broaden expectations beyond actual job opportunities. Third, schooling (with parental collusion) may encourage distaste for certain jobs which involve "manual labour and physical exertion." And fourth, "as presently organized," schools place few crucial responsibilities on students other than routinely. Responsibilities for others or even concerning others could thus be deferred[16] to the extent that they were hard to assume in the workplace.

The school's response to the phenomenon of increased and transformed use of leisure time is of course directly linked to changes in the nature of the family and to a lesser extent to aging. During our investigation, at no time did we find a social institution which so steadfastly applied itself to providing before- and after-school activities for children during their school years, and to helping them acquire competencies which would enhance their mature years as well. These essentially leisure-time school occupations are not of recent origin. They unquestionably predate the transformed family unit which we earlier described, relating more closely, perhaps, to the progressive education movement whose origins some trace back to the turn of the century. But we can certainly testify to their variety, their possibilities for student and staff commitment, their potential for heightening the tone of the educational enterprise (in traditional terms, school spirit), and the parental and student expectations they have raised over the years as normal components of the school program. These activities take many forms. An especially interesting trend over the past two to three decades has been the changing emphasis in physical education-related activities from hard-nosed competitive team sports and serious track and field athletics[17] to lifelong, semi-social pursuits such as archery, golf, tennis, orienteering, skiing, or volleyball. In both curricular and extracurricular time, other offerings include music, drama, social events, student council work, volunteer school and community service, hobbies, and clubs. Some argue that such activities invade the core curriculum and threaten its high priority. Conversely, the research group was acquainted with sufficient schools displaying excellence in both respects to doubt very much that their relationship is inverse. We caution, however, that leisure as it presently relates to school practice is a fragile thing. Subject of late to both budget restrictions and political confrontation, it remains a largely unmapped area of a school's legislated mandate.

As far as we could determine, school response to the reality of an aging population has thus far been incidental. Nor is it exactly clear what a desirable course of action should be. The research group noted that in their operating and projected language and cultural reclamation schemes, Native Indian British Columbians drew upon elders for the proper instruction of the young in school-based or associated programs. A few non-Native elementary schools to our knowledge likewise benefited from instructional or demonstrational school visits by elderly people skilled in various traditional crafts, in story telling and folklore, or in local history of interest to children. We learned also of the reverse process—student volunteers visiting home-bound or institutionalized older people to chat with them, entertain, or oblige with letter writing, errands, and other courtesies. Perhaps because, as seen by youth, preparation for aging is of

minor importance compared with preparation for work, we found little other than general health instruction and family life courses which had a direct bearing on how best to *arrive* at old age. It could be supposed, too, that life skills instruction ranging from basic literacy, through music and individual sports, to home care, money management, and computer proficiency were tenuously connected with that phase of growth called aging. Over the research phase, however, we assessed the school's role in any significant youth/age rapprochement as marginal. This is not a value judgement. Neither children, parents, nor grandparents have in any major way requested schools attempt such a thing. Otherwise, schools have opened their doors to the elderly for a multiplicity of adult educational purposes and on certain social occasions gone out of their way to invite them to special events. By far the best-known British Columbia tradition along these lines is the school homecoming or class anniversary, widely advertised and immensely popular gatherings which leaven the daily grind with a measure of nostalgia. And on a more formal level, retired persons participate and sometimes play leading parts in the lives of schools through home and school associations as well as service on school boards and, of late, on the British Columbia College of Teachers.

Reflections

Though the Commission has limited its review of societal changes to just four phenomena—changes in families, in work patterns, in the use of leisure, and in the aging process—it is sensible of the vast complexity of the topic, and hence of the futility of responses based on tinkering with a particular school system. On the other hand, to work on a grander scale, elaborating upon the combinations and permutations of total institutional interaction would be to abandon hopes of realization. What is required, it therefore seems to us, is consideration of long-term policies best suited to a few facts of provincial schooling.

With respect to changes in the nature of families, we reiterate our understanding that they are tangible, widespread, and irreversible. We are convinced that many aspects of child nurture once the prerogative of families have indeed been transferred to schools. We look upon this transfer with curiosity but not dismay. For the important question is surely not who performs what service in aid of child development but rather whether the child develops. We maintain, with the OECD researchers that "the school can help children and youth by helping to strengthen, support, and reinforce the family's interest in the child's development." We likewise contend that a policy appropriate to such a belief is one which would promote parental involvement in school affairs "recreating a community among parents of children in the school"; re-establish schools as vital focal points within the community; and have them specialize in child and youth development with emphasis on recognizing, accepting, and demonstrating responsibility.

Regarding work patterns, several imperatives arise. One is that the expectations of youth concerning not only the nature of jobs but also the realities of their educational prerequisites as well as their availability be carefully enhanced throughout their schooling. A second is that schools, post-secondary institutions, and employers from small and large business, industry, government, and other sectors convene to work out transition systems: that is, educative procedures for all youth who have arrived in that limbo between end of school and start of work. A third is deciding on the most effective teaching role the schools can play in order best to introduce youth to the workplace. We have referred to many requests for work experience programs, career counselling, and such technical instruction as computer use and industrial education, but to far fewer instances of appeals for just basic education prior to professional or on-the-job training. Nor do we have any clear impression of the occupational consequences of doing one thing or the other excepting to marvel at the rapid flight toward obsolescence of costly school equipment. Accordingly, we conclude that where policies are aimed at ensuring the school's instructional role is consistent with the technical and other requirements of work, they must be illuminated by information and opinion about job entry itself as viewed by employee and employer alike.

In the discussion of leisure, we made three points: that British Columbians are leisure loving; that recreation is age stratified; and that leisure time is both more and less supervised these days—more in the case of young children, less in the case of adolescents. We also intimated that in the latter case, serious consequences attended the undirected adolescent skirting the criminal fringe. Of the provincial enjoyment of leisure we shall say little other than that as early retirement schemes become more common a larger percentage of the population will have leisure aplenty thrust upon them. This is a matter not unrelated to life skills as they have been taught to date in schools and might be offered in the future. We do not think any attempt to destratify by age the leisure pursuits of the "culture of childhood"

is either desirable or feasible. But we incline to the view that within more structured use of leisure time as reflected in both elementary and secondary school extracurricular activities, accustoming young people to the presence and participation of those who are both older and younger than themselves has much to commend it. What we have in mind here is participation based on interest rather than covert adult supervision founded on mistrust. The misuse of leisure time is a thorny problem for any school which, through circumstances we have outlined above, finds itself at the centre of community events. We are not so naive as to suppose that instructing children in responsibility will protect schools from untoward, even criminal intrusions. We do believe, though, that policies intended to invest schools with a wider community reach should be generated with provisions for such eventualities firmly in place.

As to aging, the research group has noted the singular contributions made by retired people in direct instructional, tutorial. and helping capacities. We applaud these actions and congratulate those involved. We have mentioned examples of curricular and extracurricular offerings doubtless of direct usefulness to students throughout their lives. And we have made reference to reunions, and to post-retirement service to education through official membership on governing bodies. In our view, the real significance of these contributions is that they herald a new and exciting era in our educational history. That era starts when all schools renounce their isolation from their surrounding communities and take their places as leaders in the interdependent institutions that form the road to lifelong education. As a distinguished professor said,[18] "the benefits from a fully comprehensive and integrated educational system extending from pre-school to post-retirement, are immeasurable, and are essential to the survival of an economically productive, democratic, and informed society." When this occurs and youth and age are at ease together, we shall have achieved true community.

Suggestions

The research group hopes the foregoing discussion will be of help to British Columbians concerned over the way the nature and pace of social change affect the education of our citizens and the quality of life the future holds for our children. In addition, it suggests:

1. that each school in British Columbia review its procedures for extramural liaison with a view to ensuring that its philosophy, policy, program, and general routine are known and understood throughout the community;

2. that in arriving at and further developing school policy, each school in British Columbia consult as widely and often as possible within the community better to ensure that family needs are the driving force behind the school's operation;

3. that each school in British Columbia draw up a plan designed to enhance relations with the families of children in attendance;

4. that school boards seek ways whereby school recreational, library, and study facilities may be made more readily available to students and community outside regular school hours;

5. that as a normal part of their community leadership role, schools throughout the province give due attention to the appearance of their buildings and grounds and the deportment of their students arriving and departing;

6. that the Ministry of Education recognize the transition of youth from school to work as perhaps the most critical educational challenge facing British Columbians and take steps to ensure that young people facing this transition receive the appropriate instruction, counsel, and encouragement;

7. that schools examine their policies and practices with respect to ensuring opportunities for children to learn about and accept personal responsibility in the school setting which would also prove appropriate in the workplace;

8. that from early grades onward, British Columbia school children be helped to spend a portion of their extracurricular time engaged in forms of school and community service appropriate to their age and inclinations;

9. that increasing leisure time be recognized as a reality of modern living and school children be acquainted with its social meaning and equipped for its creative use;

10. that as a matter of policy, British Columbia schools identify those elderly persons in the community whose cultural background, love of children, and facility for recollection, demonstration, and expression are well known and invite them to assist schools in the social education of young people;

11. that the facts of increasing life expectancy be taken as one more instance of the desirability of lifelong learning in our province, and that British Columbia educational institutions take account of these facts in their policies relating to admission, fees, curriculum, budget, and administration.

References

1. Neil Sutherland.
2. A father calling usually boded ill for a child!
3. James S. Coleman and Torsten Husén.
4. Canada, the United States, Denmark, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Yugoslavia (partial), Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.
5. The last two paragraphs up to this point are based heavily on Coleman and Husén, *Becoming Adult in a Changing Society* (Paris: OECD, 1985), pp 43-45.
6. Data available in J. Robert Cowin, *1987 Environmental Scan, British Columbia Colleges and Institutes, Part III: Findings* (Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, 1987), p.27 and *passim*.
7. *Ibid.*, p.37.
8. *Ibid.*, p.39.
9. Advanced services include information generation and transmission; producer services embrace finance, business, and trade. Cowin cites Thomas A. Hutton, "Economic Outlook for Vancouver," unpublished workshop presentation, Economic Development Office, City of Vancouver, 14 May 1987. Cowin, *op. cit.*, p.21.
10. See a Toronto-based Martin Goldfarb poll reported in the *Vancouver Sun*, March 8, 1986.
11. Neil Sutherland.
12. See *British Columbia Population Forecast 1987-2011* (Victoria Ministry of Economic Development, 1987), pp 18-19.
13. *Ibid.*, p.18.
14. Gordon Titsworth, Nelson-Trail and District Labour Council.
15. We hasten to add that demands made on students vary enormously from school to school. See comments above, under "Purposes of Schooling," on the claims that are made on available time.
16. See *Becoming Adult...*, p.57.
17. These events still thrive, but young people with other interests have more options than ever before.
18. John Dennison.

5. Citizenship and Community

The essence of a public hearing is its authenticity as an act of citizenship and community resolution. At more than 60 meetings throughout the province, British Columbians came forward, often in face of long drives, poor weather, short notice, busy schedules, or personal nervousness, in order to say how they believed provincial education might be improved. many, if not most concerns sprang from individual experiences with the schools. Strong evidence was offered during these exchanges, though, not just for making school life better for individual children but for pulling communities together as well. Indeed, it seemed clear in many instances that the school was seen to be the pivot about which communities could turn, whether the issue in question was a native language, a recreational opportunity, an adventure in the arts, a meeting of old and young, an intersection of the world of learning and the world of work, or what may be called public morality. Perhaps the most compelling presentations of all, in fact, were those expressing anger over school closure for reasons of fiscal strain. Said one parent, "you close the school and you change the whole community." A second declared that "school closure is a forerunner of the death of small towns."

Historical Changes

This perception that the school is the crossroads of individualism and cooperation, the training ground for citizenship and community, the place where children start to learn of many subtle forces separating rights from responsibilities and freedoms from restrictions, has behind it a century and more of provincial change and development. Early British Columbia schools emerged with the advent of the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1840s and their subsequent establishment followed settlement and work. By today's standards, these school appear rudimentary. But in an important particular they had the advantage over their more sophisticated successors. Located face to face with ranching, sawmilling, mining, shipping, farming, logging, and other occupational realities of their day, few of the children they helped educate could be in any doubt as to how adults made a living.

These boys and girls likewise witnessed the seamier side of adult pioneer life, to which the school was to serve as a community antidote. The *Free School Act* of 1865, for instance, stressed schooling for morality and character. Ever since, school legislation has insisted upon student conformity to a school "code of conduct" and required of teachers the role model of the "kind, firm and judicious parent." Just the same, in close proximity to these earlier schools were abundant examples of successful individualists, some with scant schooling, others with more, all getting ahead. As effectively as teachers, they impressed upon youngsters the advantages of individual effort. This is not to say that early schools avoided the converse of individualism—cooperation as manifested in citizenship and a sense of community. On the contrary, the better schools of days gone by were microcosms in this respect. In good one-room schools, the older aided the younger; the stronger helped the weaker; chores were a shared responsibility; and concerts and other events were occasions for collaborative efforts toward common community purpose. Nor was there any lack of patriotic instruction as portraits of reigning monarchs, maps of the pink expanse of empire, and the singing of national anthems could testify. But in both school and community the message of individual exertion, initiative, and independence as the sign of a vibrant community long endured.

Although no clear-cut line of demarcation helps distinguish the schools just described from schools of later years in which questions of citizenship and community were perhaps more directly reflected in the daily round, it could be argued that Putman and Weir's 1925 *Survey of the School System* constituted a reasonable watershed. Scholars have debated the extent to which Commissioners J.H. Putman and G.M. Weir really believed schools were bulwarks of democracy whose purpose was "to rid society of injustices and show the way to a new, better or radically changed society."[1] It is the case, however, that following their submission, subjects more closely related to life outside the school—commercial studies, business fundamentals, home economics, manual arts, graphic arts, music, and agriculture to illustrate—found their way onto the curriculum with increasing frequency on the assumption that together with traditional offerings, they contributed "to the solution of life problems of the twentieth century."[2] Furthermore,

to these curricular components of a school's—especially a high school's—educational program would be added with steady regularity over time a repertoire of extracurricular activities intended to educate young people in artistic and athletic expression, good sportsmanship, parliamentary procedure, governmental and social organization, business routine, as well as school and community service.

Meanwhile, as these students emerged from traditional schooling in literacy and morality to educational experiences more intimately connected with community existence, schools opened their doors to all manner of adult activities both on behalf of these schools and in line with adult educational aspirations ranging from recreation through language acquisition to diploma upgrading for college or university entrance. Few trends in the history of provincial education have had such positive impact upon community sensibilities as this blurring of the boundary between schools and their immediate social environment. Few developments have with such firmness plucked "citizenship" from the realm of abstraction and afforded it local habitation. Few changes in provincial life have contrasted so sharply individualistic as opposed to cooperative modes of being, and few have done more to accommodate both modes.

Social Change

While schools underwent these transformations in what and how they taught, and in their attitude toward supporting communities, these same communities were themselves going through significant changes. An eminent scholar highlights some of them in a powerful statement about social capital in the United States.[3] First, he argues, the household is greatly altered. At one time it was the centre of the family economy. More and more that centre is elsewhere. Men, and increasingly women, make their living outside the household thus isolating it "from the mainstream." Second, he says, this economic shift has brought about a corresponding shift in the "locus of dependency." That is, households which were at one time society's chief welfare institution no longer fulfill this function. The state does. Third, this development has "reduced incentives for parental responsibility" in several ways. It has raised parental expectations for state aid in their children's college education. It has created a demand for "structured, school-based activities under professional supervision" to replace neighbourhood play. It has diminished parental authority over their children. It has resulted in parental delegation of such things as sex education and career counselling to schools. And it has led to an overall weakening of the family bond reflected in adolescent drug and alcohol use, illegitimate births, suicide, and other serious manifestations of community isolation. In short, as families have concentrated more on careers and earning, their function of providing children with good attitudes toward effort, toward others, and toward themselves—the nub of citizenship and community—has diminished and that of the school, *faute de mieux*, has increased.

Provincial Approaches

This negotiatory stance adopted by schools and communities is much in evidence in British Columbia. For instance, though varying from district to district, community use of school facilities and vice versa appears the rule rather than the exception. And requests that schools pick up on certain child-rearing practices, once the office of family and community, arose at every hearing in some form or other. Occasional bitterness over a school's perceived delinquency in not delivering these services revealed the depth and long standing of community expectations. Such was the case when teachers work-to-rule strategies curtailed the public schools' extracurricular activities at one point during the Commission's term. But for the most part comments were with reference to programs both in place and in operation, though meriting further support. This was particularly so of language and cultural education best exemplified by appeals from Native Indian communities, communities with backgrounds in Russian culture, and groups instrumental in initiating and carrying through French immersion programs. It was also true of observations about pre-school training, family life education, health instruction (including information on AIDS, venereal disease, and contraception), home economics, values education, personal/career counselling, ecology, and labour history. On the question of religion there was disagreement. Some from the non-public sector declared it the true context of all educational endeavour. Others deplored general lack of observance of Bible reading and prayers[4] as legally required in B.C. public schools. Yet others concluded that this same legislation could be attacked as infringing the Human Rights Act of the province and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of the Constitution of Canada. Religion apart, though, it seemed clear that parents, and some students as well, were looking to schools to accept responsibility for guidance no longer evenly available in

homes. This request seems recognition at once of the fact that families *have* relinquished several important child-rearing obligations, and that requesting schools to accept a surrogate role constitutes a move toward equalizing educational opportunity in the widest sense.

There are dangers, of course, in borrowing the previously quoted analysis of shifts in the social dynamics of U.S. education to make a point regarding what was said at hearings around British Columbia and through more than two thousand briefs filed at Commission headquarters in Vancouver. We must point out that whereas the analysis leaves the impression that U.S. households for several quite understandable reasons have *surrendered* nurturing responsibilities to other institutions, our own impression of British Columbians is that they wished, rather, to *transfer* those responsibilities yet keep very closely in touch with implementation. Put another way, communities said time after time that they desired to play major parts in their school affairs. Under school law, provisions already exist for pubic participation. Regular school board meetings are open to the public, as are minutes. At the school level, no legislation currently governs public access, but some schools encourage consultative committees or parent-teacher associations[5] which are organized provincially under the B.C. Home and School Federation. Moreover, some boards designate particular schools as community schools "staffed and organized to provide learning opportunities for all people in the neighbourhood."[6] We shall return to community schools shortly. Meanwhile, we are left in no doubt that citizens of our province wish to participate as fully as possible in arriving at and helping with a mode of schooling that satisfies their children's socializing needs as well as their sense of community ethos. Nor do they wish to limit their interests to mere parochial matters.

Participants in Nelson captured the spirit of this issue. "There are many cultural groups in our schools," said one parent. "[We] all rally round and are willing to meet with the Premier, the Minister, officials and so on. There is a perception that education is separate from the culture of the community, that we send our children to school to be educated by 'professionals.' But input is needed in the schools from parents, industry, the Ministry. There should be a...provincial advocacy committee to deal with education on an ongoing basis. I am not knocking education. It does not deserve knocking. I am asking for a continuing guiding force."

"We have two major concerns," declared a second parent. "Parental involvement is one. We would like to share in decision making. We want notice in advance of any proposed changes. We want to bridge the gap between Ministry of Education policies and decisions which affect the community. We also want to know how the system works. There should be monthly meetings with speakers on various programs. Attitudes are changing. Administrators no longer see parents simply as fund raisers. When parents have valid ideas they should be heard."

Families

This school-centred aspect of the citizenship and community issue is of profound importance to the province, most of all to parents. Household circumstances have indeed altered in recent years. The extent and increase of lone-parent families is but one of a host of the indicators. In 1976 there were 628,445 British Columbia families of whom 60,200 or 9.6% were lone-parent.[7] In 1981 the figures stood at 727,675 and 78,715 (10.8%) respectively. In 1986 they were 775,880 and 96,645 (12.5%). When families with no children at home are subtracted from the 1981 and 1986 totals, results are yet more arresting. According to this calculation, in 1981 there were 456,155 families with children of whom 78,715 or 17.3% were single-parent. In 1986, the figures were 481,095 and 96,645 (20.0%). Further basic manipulations using the 1981 and 1986 families-with-children figures are not without interest. In 1981, 82.0% of single parents were women; in 1986 the figure was 81.9%. Children[8] at home in lone-parent families in 1981 numbered 118,145; in 1986 there were 134,990. We have taken note, of course, that it does not necessarily follow that every child in a single-parent family lacks for nurture. We do know, however, that in 1985 the average income of the only parent in a female-headed lone-parent British Columbia family ($14,275) was slightly more than half that of a male-headed lone-parent family ($26,265).

We also know that lone parenting is nationally on the increase. According to Statistics Canada, "the vast majority of lone parents are increasingly separated, divorced and never-married mothers in the younger ages with dependent children in the formative years at home. And it is precisely these lone mothers in sole charge of young children, as compared with male lone parents and parents in husband-wife families, who command the lowest average family in-

come, have the highest frequency of low income, and must spend more of their total family income on shelter than is considered 'comfortable' or acceptable."[9] Furthermore, it can be assumed that the social and psychological strain experienced by parents and their children who must undergo the trauma of dissolved marriages or separations has a direct and restrictive impact on children's lives including their lives at school; any such impact is bound to affect the life of the school and, through proximity and interaction, the life of every citizen in the community—and, in the long run, of the province itself. Similar cases might be made for the fact that family counsel and example in things like drug and alcohol use, respect for age, juvenile crime, or responsible sex can no longer be taken for granted in British Columbia.

Schools

It would be tempting to conclude from the foregoing that the problems raised are less knotty than they seem, in that the issues are out in the open, adults are eager to help devise policies leading to solutions, and schools, which have already come so far in accommodating social change, might be persuaded to go an extra mile. It turns out, though, that for two major reasons the situation is more thorny than one might think.

First, considerable confusion surrounds the schools' present mandate. On the one hand, they engage in curricular activities for which they were primarily designed and which the quoted U.S. study characterizes as "*opportunities, demands, and rewards*." On the other hand, they are the locus of essentially welfare services such as health, nutrition, social counselling, and legal advice. Then too, they present an array of extracurricular activities that have been but vaguely defined under the *Act* to date, though they are generally assumed to embody opportunities for creative socialization. As presently practised, these three endeavours were perceived by school people as creating a network of mutual interference, the most vulnerable being teaching curricular subjects to the satisfaction of students, parents, boards, accrediting teams, and the Ministry of Education.

Second, schools are increasingly required to address themselves to giving children what the U.S. study identifies as inputs heretofore related to families, notably, "*attitudes, effort*, and *conceptions of self*" but which today's busy schools are in the weakest position to render; witness scores of teachers who told of boys and girls whose innocence in such things as "manners" preclude brisk settling-down to solid learning. Witness as well the fact that social attitudes change with time and circumstance. To exemplify, respect for age was once though of as a social grace or form of politeness. It became more tangible when manifested as tax dollars applied to retirement schemes and, with a vengeance, more tangible yet when these costs soared.[10] For schools to help develop in the young practical as well as humanitarian attitudes to citizenship and community challenges such as these would be no mean feat. Be that as it may, the research group deems the attempt worthy of consideration. We think of schools as places which complement or compensate for the actual educational function of families, emphatically where community well being is concerned. Thus we subscribe to Coleman's U.S. insight "that schools, to be effective, must change as families change, must be adjusted to the conditions of the institutions they complement." And though tempering the thought with certain reservations regarding custodial and welfare services, we concur with his vision—a school to care for children "*all day; from birth to school age; after school, every day, till parents return home from work; and all summer*," and to provide them with the social confidence "to succeed in school and as adults."

Summary

To summarize impressions of British Columbia, we note that dramatic changes since 1960 in economic conditions, family structure, community self-image, and assumptions governing personal conduct have together rendered the citizenship aspects of child-rearing—vocational and community service—exceptionally difficult. In the tradition of western education, parents have passed on the problem to other agencies including the schools. But despite rhetoric to the contrary, schools have been obliged to hew to the task they know and perform best of all: teaching reading, composition, arithmetic, social studies, science, and certain manual, graphic, and performing arts. High schools, moreover, have tended to cater to that minority of students who are destined for post-secondary education. Little wonder that, as an astute practitioner[11] observes, many of the majority "are alienated from family or schooling or work, or indeed from any of the major civilizing forces that shape and maintain our lives. They have a subculture of their own which

exists within but pays no allegiance to the larger society." Society, meanwhile, continues to wield level of education as "the great determiner of employment."

How, then, to break this socially debilitating cycle? Clearly, step one is to acknowledge conditions as they are; and step two is to propose an institution which might satisfy these conditions for the greater benefit of the communities they serve. They are steps not without risk. But perhaps they can be taken with the knowledge that in 1988, British Columbia communities appear eager and its schools not inhospitable to steps in this direction. A word of caution, though. One of the principal tenets of local authority in schooling is its capacity as well as its right to decide within provincial limits what educational characteristics best suit community aspirations. We stress that just as no existing school could profitably be transferred holus-bolus elsewhere, neither can any school we propose satisfy every community's need. Community initiatives, including determining financial priorities, thus remain paramount in our thinking. This is doubly important since the model which attracts us as of no small relevance to this discussion is the community school itself, a concept of some standing in North America but one of considerable latitude in its execution.

The Community School

What is a community school? The Association for Community Education tells us that it is a school committed to community education, a "process that concerns itself with everything that affects the well being of all citizens within a given community." This is a disarmingly expansive definition to be sure, and one which both in scope and intent distinguishes community schools from other schools, the best of which would doubtless seek to cooperate with their communities but scarcely advance "the well being of all citizens" as central to their mandates. Community schools[12] operate according to certain fundamental beliefs—that learning is a lifelong process; that people enjoy superior citizenship when they help make educational decisions which affect their lives; that communities contain many important human, institutional, and material resources of interest to school children; and that a local school can "serve as a catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems." An additional advantage is said to be that community schools can reach out to the 70% to 80% of local residents who have no children in the school, serve their interests as well, tap their skills, and seek their advice. Besides these mutually beneficial services, these schools assume that children who attend them acquire a more receptive attitude to education when they "see their school used by people of all ages," find more meaning in formal education when they see it "integrated with other aspects of their daily lives," and feel prouder of their school when they see it "used and valued by the community." Ideally, community school staffs consist of men and women who espouse the philosophical purpose of their schools and are trained and experienced in realizing them. Under present arrangements as well, each community school retains a coordinator whose métier is ensuring that community resources are "directly integrated into the school curriculum."

In addition to these philosophical and organizational matters, what do community schools look like and what sorts of things do they engage in? An impressive example is East Vancouver's Britannia Community School, a magnificent complex of administrative and classroom blocks in and around the old building surrounded by swimming, skating, gymnastic, auditorium, library, meeting, and other facilities that have dramatically revitalized an older part of the city's lower socio-economic north slope. Less ambitious examples would assume the appearance of any ordinary school, the exception being the coming to and departing from the premises at all hours of the day and evening, weekday and weekend, workday and holiday, of steady streams of men and women patently above school age. Central to these schools' endeavours, of course, are teaching and custodial functions required under the *Act*. That is, children progress through the elementary grades and, where a high school is involved, prepare for post-secondary education or for the work force. In and about them, too, there emerge such activities as day care, pre-school, nursery school, classes in English as a second language, employment counselling, partner programs with industry, youth counselling, senior citizens' programs, transportation to and from centres, high school student help for elementary students, daytime and evening community use of facilities including computers, youth recreation programs, library use, crime prevention seminars, leisure programs, social service coordination, adult and continuing education, nutrition assistance, and vocational training.[13]

But why should a mode of schooling that is currently such a minor—one might say a minuscule—part of the British Columbia educational scene be adopted as a model for the future? First, no other educational institution is so widely

recognized, so well equipped, so costly, and so underused as the school in its present form. A logical way of increasing its relative efficiency and at the same time of serving the interests of lifelong education is to renounce the contrary notion, steeped in history, that schools are designed for children, youth, and young adults alone, a premise that community schools have successfully challenged. Second, schools and communities dealing directly, systematically, continuously, and energetically with one another on educational questions are most likely to serve the interests of young people who are not university bound and for whom changing social conditions have made schools both irrelevant and hard to endure. Third, schools which work in substantive collaboration with their communities provide excellent chances for sustained participatory democracy at a time when for so many the mass media have rendered government conveniently remote, and when even attending PTA or school board meetings and lobbying on particular issues can prove a sporadic and disjointed engagement. Fourth, in schools grounded on community commitment, students themselves are far more likely to discover and benefit from seeing local democracy in action, becoming themselves involved in work experience, and living as well as witnessing acts of social responsibility. Fifth, the institution in question is just that—a principle, custom, system, that forms part of society rather than an edifice requiring architectural invention. No doubt a school best furnishes the nucleus of any such scheme. We are, after all, speaking of a community school. But these will not all be Britannias (though such as are may count themselves fortunate indeed). For many, sponsorship and coordination of related enterprises in other facilities will be the early pattern. Some will venture but a short way toward full community integration; others will go the distance. Characterizing all such undertakings, however, will be their flexibility in face of opportunity and local policy, bearing in mind that the school provides the only systematic point of contact between adults and children as well as between other established care-giving social institutions and children. Sixth, enabling legislation is already in place allowing boards to designate units within their jurisdiction as community schools. Seventh, the concept lends itself admirably to incremental development and experimentation in the form of pilot projects.

Beyond these reasons for adopting some form of the community school idea, what might such schools look like? Again, we stress diversity according to community needs and their impact on board policy. Elementary schools, we think, would ideally be small, intimate, family-oriented neighbourhood units of some 300 children or so, heavily involved with parents as partners in children's education. Where possible they would provide or help acquire space for day care or pre-school throughout the calendar year. They would also serve as the site for other year-round social services, though these would be delivered under such administrative auspices as would facilitate rather than hinder the school's primary purpose of teaching and learning. Elementary schools in different districts would be encouraged to adopt different approaches exemplified overall by such special forms as Froebel, Montessori, or French Immersion schools or, within these and more standard alternatives, different ways of teaching and mastering reading, arithmetic, social studies, computer technology and other subjects. Together with other agencies, too, these schools would devise sophisticated diagnostic procedures to help identify children with learning difficulties of one sort or another.

Secondary schools, we believe, would attempt a serious response to a searching query: "How do we establish at the secondary level a system of the *plurality of excellence*, that is to say, a variety of career paths in formal schooling leading to different types of high-level competence other than academic ability? What changes in the reward system outside the educational sector are called for in order to achieve this and to alleviate the mounting credentialism?"[14] In doing so, they would increasingly relate their annual round to the world of work, creating status for all students including young people not embarked upon academic programs and, consistent with their community oneness, approaching industry, large and small business, labour unions, apprenticeship schemes, post-secondary educational institutions, and pre-service and graduate teacher education faculties in systematic fashion with a view to sharing in the vocational[15] upbringing of young citizens. Secondary schools would scrutinize the curriculum in order to set up a core, Grades 8 to 10, which in addition to entrance prerequisites called for by post-secondary institutions would respond to the needs of citizens in a changing society.

That core would aim at mastery in communications skills, the practical and social workings of mass media and technology, the creative and vocational arts, and citizenship to include not only provincial, Canadian, and world geography and history but also purposeful work in the social service field. About this core would be layered senior courses, Grades 11 and 12, most closely associated with students' vocational ambitions, core and senior courses to be distinguished as "content" as opposed to "skill" or "experience" subjects or parts of subjects and evaluated accordingly. These secondary schools would accommodate adults wishing to complete previously abandoned or never attempted high school work. They would also facilitate advanced placement in certain post-secondary subjects for very bright students.

And they would combine the curriculum with periodic personal, program, and career counselling in consultation with parents or guardians.[16]

Objections

Both by airing these matters during its internal deliberations and in consulting the record of opinions from parents, practitioners, and others, the research group naturally identified many pronouncements as to why the community school idea is not the answer to what some consider diminished levels of community engagement and responsibility among the young. Collectively these views appear somewhat as follows. The fundamental notion is utopian. It is likewise one-sided because based upon the undemonstrated assumption that citizens *prefer* to participate in rather than delegate the formal education of the young. The idea is also costly. It would require untold disbursements on auxiliary facilities and personnel. It would lead to administrative confusion. Nobody would know who was really in charge. Vested community interests might feed upon this uncertainty, introducing essentially political issues into the local educational arena and thereby causing community divisiveness instead of the anticipated community cohesion. Or schools and communities might not see eye-to-eye on priorities and nurture antagonisms detrimental to youngsters obliged to live in both camps. For at least two reasons, standards would suffer. High schools especially would retain marginally able or interested students who otherwise would not be present. And because of interruptions brought on by social services delivered on or near the premises, teachers would have to work within a disruptive milieu inimical to pedagogical concentration and continuity. Further, for reasons of confidentiality or even perceived stigma, close neighbours, students, and parents might find probation and welfare services inappropriately located in schools. Teachers used to working "behind the classroom door" (and they are legion) would be intimidated by lay penetration of their habitat. Training them otherwise would be financially prohibitive. Student enthusiasm, moreover, could be dampened through sudden, unaccustomed, and inordinate adult presence.

Possible Solutions

Each of the above is a reasonable concern. No doubt existing community schools are familiar with most of them and perhaps some have been overwhelmed by their realization. Others, on the contrary, have met them head on and thrived. But it would be foolish to dismiss such concerns out of hand. Indeed we consider them in many respects the starting point for serious discussion. Certainly any school would need to have overcome anxieties like these through tangible arrangements before getting ahead of itself. At the same time both opinion and observation convinces us that such problems are not insuperable. We do not see community schools as utopian; after all, they exist. We recognize as debatable (and debated) larger measures of community participation in formal schooling; in our judgement, though, the participators have it. There is no question that costs above the usual lurk in any scheme whose boundaries are at times so hard to define. There is no easy path here, short of budget priorities, grantsmanship, fees for some services, volunteerism, and above all, incremental development. Administrative confusion, it seems to us, is a function of unclear mandates, faulty organization, and role conflict. There is nothing in our opinion inherently confusing about parents helping one another and helping children acquire a first-rate education relevant to its times.

Regarding standards, our feeling for the question is that under the level of management we believe to be currently available, they would more probably rise if for no other reason than the halo effect attending successful new enterprises based on self-esteem. Concerning intrusion by others into the traditional realm of children and their teachers, due allowance for, say, the natural shyness of adolescence is doubtless indicated, as is corresponding regard for the private moments of all young people. Nor could we countenance impromptu invasions of classroom space or contrived exhibitions founded more on public relations than on sound learning. Thoughtful intra-school and community communications in these and related matters would prove all-important here. We believe them possible.

The question of the propriety of certain quasi-confidential social services being associated with schools is moot. Admittedly, schools hold few secrets. It is hence probable that probation, welfare, and similarly sensitive social assistance ought better to be carried out elsewhere and the school advised within ethical and legal limits of any educational implications. As for accustoming children to the comings and goings of supportive adults in their midst, we have yet to

see a generation gap so wide it could not be bridged at all, and have learned about touching instances of strong bonding of youth and age through educational experiences.

When considering alternative ways of conducting the educational enterprise there is always the danger of implying their uniqueness. It is important, therefore, to emphasize that in employing expressions such as self-esteem, humanitarian attitudes, community commitment, superior citizenship, lifelong education, participatory democracy, social responsibility, experimentation, partnership in education, diagnostic procedures, vocational upbringing, volunteerism, or first-rate education, we are not implying that existing schools run along community lines have somehow cornered the market on all that is desirable in schooling. Quite the contrary. Within schools whose aims and educational styles seemed predominantly self-generated and whose instructional efforts were exclusively on behalf of school-aged youngsters, we know of examples of excellence both in scholastic attainment and commitment beyond self. What we wish to convey, rather, is that the community-school concept holds great promise as the means of accommodating the widest possible range of abilities, interests, social and economic origins, or personal and occupational ambitions in an educational environment where progress toward community morale is deliberate, open, and understood. It is equally important to repeat that we see not the quantum leap but instead the incremental step as the means of locomotion best suited to approaching the community-school image. Focus is on neighbourhood school and community. Their respective strengths and facilities call for careful analysis and deployment. As Britannia, King George, and other urban community schools demonstrate year round, large-scale operations are possible. But they are not the starting point. In fact, implementation might usefully span the time a child spends in a secondary or an elementary school, perhaps five or seven years. During this period, boards would identify points of departure, facilities, staff, and budget implications, decide on the scope of the transformation, establish community contacts, and embark on a plan. By the end of the period the entire student body would have grown up with the system,[17] the neighbourhood gradually become used to it, and pre-service and in-service teacher education interests addressed themselves to its peculiar requirements.

Suggestions

In connection with the foregoing discussion, the research group suggests:

1. that in line with recent social changes affecting family structure, the nature of work, and the changing social composition of British Columbia society, provincial schools should emphasize citizenship concepts and practices in day-to-day school operations;

2. that in line with existing legislation, British Columbia school boards be requested to assess the present level of interest in the community school concept within their jurisdictions, and to explore the form of community schooling best suited to their regions.

References

1. See Jean Mann, "G.M. Weir and H.B. King: Progressive Education or Education for the Progressive State?" in J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (eds.), *Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1980), p.93.

2. *Ibid.*, p.95.

3. James S. Coleman, "Families and Schools," *Educational Researcher*, August-September 1987, pp 32-38. Though aimed at the U.S. scene, the article is not without significance for British Columbia.

4. Section 164 of the *Public Schools Act* states, "All public schools shall be opened by the reading, without explanation or comment, of a passage of Scripture to be selected from readings prescribed or approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The reading...shall be followed by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer...."

5. In 1959, membership approximated 52,000. By 1974, it had dwindled to some 5,000, and today numbers roughly 700. This radical decline seems to reflect several changes including discontinuance of a government grant in 1975, preference for District-Parent Council activities, and the growth of direct political lobbying.

6. Alan C. Nichols, *A Guide to the School Act of British Columbia*, Second Edition (Vancouver: British Columbia School Trustees Association, 1980), p.66. This is a most useful guide for the lay person and should be revised to match current legislation.

7. Statistics Canada data throughout.

8. Twenty-four years and under.

9. Statistics Canada, *Canada's Lone-Parent Families* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984), n.p.

10. It has been said that currently it takes a minimum of seven workers to support one person on the Canada Pension Plan and that by the years 2000-2010 it will take 17 workers to support the same level of benefits.

11. Jim Bowman.

12. Community schools date back to 1973 in British Columbia. They are now in operation, working under formal mandate from their local boards, in the following school districts: Vancouver, Burnaby, North Vancouver, Surrey, Victoria, Sooke, Nanaimo, Terrace, Powell River, and Prince George.

13. Of course, many activities similar to these are also carried out in schools not designated as community schools.

14. Torsten Husén, *The School in Question: A Comparative Study of the School and Its Future in Western Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.180.

15. One of the peculiarities of secondary schooling in British Columbia is its provision of a measure of vocational or career counselling and orientation but its reluctance to help train youngsters for specific occupations. We take the view here that it would be helpful if *all* schools, elementary and secondary alike, were considered to be vocational in function in that they are surely the most intense and lengthy part of a child's introduction to a calling in life.

16. The last four paragraphs were drawn from occasional Commission papers written by Jim Bowman and follow his text fairly closely.

17. Excepting children transferred in, who according to local circumstances might require special orientation.

6. Politics in Education

In the spring of 1987, an atmosphere of political confrontation pervaded British Columbia education. To some extent the brittle relationships at the time complicating the interests and efforts of teachers, boards, government, students, and the public originated over several earlier years of economic recession.[1] Coupled with this financial slowdown which fixed educational funding below provincial expectations was a dramatic decrease in the number of children attending public schools. In 1975, this total stood at 525,344. By 1986 it had dropped by over 58,000 to 467,053. Classrooms closed. Teacher unemployment soared. Boards either reduced services or exceeded their budgets, thereby submitting to professional, parental, or student complaint in the one case or to official trusteeship in the other. In the course of hearings, however, it soon became clear that political acrimony stemmed less from the nagging disagreements of past years than from current labour legislation. Specifically, Bill 19 (Industrial Relations Reform Act) and Bill 20 (Teaching Profession Act) together were to effect historic changes in the way teachers and others would participate in collective bargaining and in the mechanisms governing teacher certification, professional development, and discipline. Teachers were dismayed that Bill 19 revoked compulsory BCTF membership and established both uncertified and certified bargaining rights, and claimed that Bill 20 set up a College of Teachers devised "to split the unitary nature of the BCTF...." But what incensed teachers perhaps more than the legislation in question was their allegation that "there was no government consultation with teachers or the BCTF over the specific legislation...brought forward" and no response to "what was asked for in BCTF policy as supported by membership vote."

Effect on Inquiry

In the early days of the Commission, teacher reaction to these perceived political slights affected its work in two ways. First, it was faced with confused or bitter responses to both curricular and extracurricular job actions on the part of teachers resentful of what they saw as government attempts to split the BCTF, jeopardize teacher security, and increase the cost of the educational bureaucracy. Students were puzzled. "The teachers' strike and unrest is interfering with our work," a student declared. "What is Bill 20?" asked another. "We don't know, but it sure makes the teachers mad." Parents accustomed to continuity of teacher services expressed indignation over their interruption as a means of political leverage. They also deplored the fact that insurance regulations requiring a teacher be present if non-teacher volunteers conducted extracurricular activities precluded such activities if teachers so willed. Second, either individually or through their local groups, many teachers associated the Commission with government intransigence over Bills 19 and 20, declining for the moment to communicate beyond this perception. Nor did they mince words. "We suggest you spend your time and our money demanding withdrawal of Bill 20 so that you can get on with true and valid consultation..." wrote one teachers' local president, questioning the Commission's credibility and observing that teachers felt "insulted that the educational expertise available in all corners of this province is not even considered." Another local expressed its concerns over "accepting the validity of a Royal Commission immediately following the imposition of Bills 19 and 20," concluding that "until such government interference is stopped, the validity of your report is meaningless." Yet another stated it had "no confidence that your Royal Commission is independent, nor that a review leading to recommendations is intended," and went on to assert that "when the opinions of the province's teachers are held in such obvious contempt by the government, there is no value in the expression of opinions to government."

Historical Perspectives

Though the political climate of spring 1987 sometimes made heavy going of Commission hearings, scepticism so abruptly displayed was not a new phenomenon but the current version of an old one rooted in early attempts by teachers to improve the conditions of schooling and to establish teaching as a recognized and valued occupation. Elsewhere the research group has hinted at the uneven quality of education, province-wide, in the first few decades of the century.

As well as coping with classroom problems which often exceeded their resources for resolution, teachers received modest salaries in comparative terms. They enjoyed neither tenure nor pensions. And with few exceptions, neither did they find occasion for systematic organization, their assemblies generally consisting of government-instigated teacher institutes and summer schools. In short, teaching was a highly bureaucraticized job, organized and directed from the top down. Nor, for that matter, could it have been easy for teachers to come up with more forceful means of association. As has been observed, World War I with its aftermath of western suspicion of Bolshevism hardened many Canadians against unions which they viewed as essentially unpatriotic, an opinion many believed justified by the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.

Whether subsequent teacher organization was to follow a "professional" or "labour" approach proved to be a question of prolonged debate among British Columbia teachers themselves. It can be said, though, that their initial politicization began amid labour-related circumstances and included labour tactics. In 1916, the newly formed Vancouver Teachers' Association discussed the "advisability of forming a provincial federation" of teachers; this exchange led to an inaugural annual meeting early in 1917 to deal with major grievances including low salaries, tenure and contractual uncertainties, and minimal progress in teachers' rights, school management, and participation in formulating educational policy. The British Columbia Teachers' Federation was incorporated under the Benevolent Societies Act on July 12, 1919. By that time, its potential for focussing political action was already recognized. Five months prior to this event, members of the Victoria Teachers' Association withheld their services for two days over differing perspectives—the Victoria Board and their own—regarding wartime economies and their post-war consequences. In 1921 with much local encouragement, New Westminster teachers went on strike for a week over the city board's refusal to negotiate salaries consistent with other lower mainland communities. Lacking precedence, these job actions required prolonged and complicated responses resulting in salary settlements which by today's standards appear token but which fixed for time to come an important principle—the right to negotiate.

Though on occasion supported by labour, however, the BCTF and its local associations nevertheless remained ambivalent about direct affiliation with one or another organization within the labour movement itself. The question arose in 1922 and was declared lost on a tied vote at the annual general meeting. Similar divisions marked 1937 and 1938 attempts to persuade membership on the merits of labour affiliation. In 1944, on the strength of a plebiscite vote of 1,293 to 1,021 in favour, the Federation declared its alliance with the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC). When, though, the TLC decided in 1955 to merge with the Canadian Congress of Labour, the Federation used the opportunity to review its position. At the 1956 annual general meeting a fiercely debated resolution to join the new labour organization failed by a vote of 304 to 275, and direct ties with organized labour unions have remained severed since then.

This decision, though, did not deter BCTF determination to confront government on a series of issues central to its close interests, including salaries, automatic membership, educational finance, pensions, class size, and collective bargaining. In all these cases the Federation pushed hard. When in 1976 the Anti-Inflation Board review rolled back teachers' salary gains, it took its case to the B.C. Supreme Court, unsuccessfully as it transpired. Politically speaking, its 1971-72 campaign against Bill 3 proved yet more spectacular. Devised to amend the Public Schools Act so that negotiated teacher salary increases above a "fixed per centum" would be subject to local property owner approval, Bill 3 removed in the view of teachers the bargaining rights they had worked for since the Federation's inception. Their response was direct—a declared stand against Social Credit policy and overt planning for government defeat in the forthcoming election. Challenged by two of its members on the matter of disbursing for political purposes funds collected by levy from membership, the Federation's Executive Committee obeyed a court injunction to desist. But a voluntary group, the Teachers' Political Action Committee, took up the cause, sponsored an advertising campaign, supported 35 candidates (32 of whom were elected), and witnessed a New Democratic Party victory later declared "surprising and satisfying!"[3]

As the pace and intensity of political activism picked up over the long history of provincial teacher organization, both provincial and local education authorities likewise found the politics of education a challenging reality of the democratic order. A noted scholar writes of initial opposition to "fee-based denominational structures of education" and of the "consensus" implemented between 1872 and 1886 endorsing common schools following repeated political confrontation and prolonged, heated debate.[4] After the 1872 legislation which set in place three-person elected school boards, eventual political developments saw local boards and the Department (or, later, the Ministry) of Education strive for a symbiotic relationship based on the fact that as the public school system grew, progressively less manage-

able demands were being made on the provincial treasury.[5] The subsequent history of their trading aspects of local autonomy (teacher recruitment and dismissal, curriculum, or supervision for example) in return for proportionately greater local financial support reveals how incomplete the symbiosis proved to be. A specialist describes the position in the 1980s from the district superintendents' point of view.[6] "From the vantage point of the 1970s," he writes, "...it was impossible to foresee all the forces that would emerge in the 1980s at local and provincial levels to make the work of the superintendents more difficult and their positions less secure."[11]

"Today," he continues, "these forces are evident. The partisan politics that had been confined to urban boards in the 1970s have become more pronounced in the 1980s throughout the province. Trustees have also increasingly reflected the views of single-issue or special-interest constituencies, bound as they are sometimes to such groups for support. Teachers, special education lobbies, and language rights associations...now indirectly shape administrative decisions through their influence with governance officials. At the same time, the zone of community consent about administrative activity, which has been generally large in earlier decades, has shrunk in the 1980s as more diverse community interests question the great unwritten consensus about the purpose and value of schools. In the 1980s, superintendents have also found themselves caught up in the intense teacher-government struggle that has marked this decade, or what columnist Crawford Kilian has called 'the school wars.' "

Restraint curtailing local spending, he shows, "removed from local boards their authority to set district budgets" and in certain cases turned trustees toward other things, "some of which had been exclusively administrative domains thus causing a blurring of governance and administrative functions. At the same time, local dissatisfaction with levels of funding made available through provincial finance formulae led to board resistance and, in some instances, open rebellion against provincial authorities." The while, superintendents spent much time "managing their political profiles," engaging in "support or coalition building," or defusing "potentially divisive situations."

Current Events

Over the two years or so preceding the Commission's mandate and throughout its work during 1987-88, manifestations of educational politicization such as the above were reported daily in the news media. To illustrate, during the school year 1985-86, students in several British Columbia secondary schools walked out of their classes in protest of the Education (Interim) Finance Act (1982) which they understood adversely affected the quality of their schooling. That they did so is not surprising given the political example set by a number of boards and by teachers who took exception to government ceilings on school board budgets, the removal of non-residential property assessment from board control, and the direction of monies from taxation on commercial property to provincial general revenues. As a participant analyst pointed out, among various dissentient local bodies, the Vancouver School Board perhaps assumed the highest profile politically speaking in its disregard for the 1982 financially restrictive legislation. In the municipal election of November 1984, the Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE) declared in its campaign literature that "the survival of our schools is at stake. The current NPA [Non-Partisan Association] majority on school board is supporting and implementing the provincial government's cuts.... They are sitting on their hands while the rights of elected school trustees are undermined.... Help save our schools by stopping the cuts and restoring quality education."[7] When elected in December 1984, the new Vancouver board unanimously approved a motion declaring that "the restraint program has reduced public school educational services to a critical level" and resolving that the residual budget for 1985 and the annual budget for 1985-86 be prepared "at the 1984 level of services for submission to the Minister of Education...." This political statement the Minister met head on through invoking Section 79 of the Public Schools Act and placing the Vancouver School Board under official trusteeship.[8] The public, however, seemed to shy away from confrontation on this scale. At the next municipal polls, COPE candidates for school trusteeship were electorally mauled.

By the fall of 1987, many political issues that had affected provincial education over preceding years coalesced as functions of Bills 19 and 20. A brief survey of events occurring over school year 1987-88 gives a sense of the political background against which those most deeply involved in provincial education played out their parts. In September, several school boards still maintained disciplinary letters in the files of teachers who had walked off their jobs the previous spring in protest against Bills 19 and 20. By way of counter protest, the BCTF Representative Assembly resolved to continue instruction-only action (no extracurricular activity sponsorship or supervision) province-wide until all such

letters were removed. In response to government legislation that would establish both uncertified local associations and certified union locals, the Federation "overwhelmingly endorsed" a drive "to achieve certified union locals in every school district in the province." The Federation and numerous local associations acquainted government with their opposition to separation of professional responsibilities and bargaining rights, changes in the status, role, and responsibilities of principals and vice-principals, and the retention of wage controls over teacher bargaining for another year. Reports of a summer conference proposed teacher strategies for ensuring that teacher candidates for the newly constituted College of Teachers would be "committed to making it serve the interests of teachers in certification, teacher standards and professional discipline, discouraging a duplicate organization of indeterminate powers, at indeterminate cost and as a consequence weakening the BCTF." The Canadian Teachers' Federation and the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession lent support to the Federation cause, the former by way of a $250,000 donation in aid of the BCTF's "struggle with the provincial government."

Later in September, the Federation Executive Committee moved to suspend the instruction-only campaign, placed one northern board in dispute, and reserved judgement on another pending local resolution of the problem surrounding filed letters of reprimand. In October, the BCTF held a Special General Meeting (only the second in its entire history) at which it approved revised bylaws "enabling the federation to become an organization of autonomous local unions." The BCTF Executive Committee reaffirmed its position on the Royal Commission on Education: that the Federation would present a brief but not become "involved in commission organization, research, collation of responses, or organizations of hearings and presentations." In November, the government confirmed it would provide materials, financial support, and seminars in order to help prepare school trustees for bargaining under the Industrial Relations Reform Act. Federation President Elsie McMurphy seized the occasion to term the move "disruptive" and one likely to cast "doubt on the impartiality of government in labour relations." She also claimed that "the Vander Zalm government's attempt to knock out the BCTF with its combination Bills 19-20 punch has failed" and that "the heartfelt cry of teachers, students, trustees, parents, and probably the majority of the public is: Leave us alone, leave our system alone, and let us get on with the job of teaching and learning."

In December, teachers of two districts still without 1987-88 contract agreements struck in an effort to force resumption of bargaining. The boards in question secured court injunctions ordering teachers back to work. By mid-month, a majority of each Federation local association had signed up for continuing membership; and as Christmas approached, over half the province's BCTF locals had passed a certification vote "to become a trade union for purposes of the Industrial Relations Act." By March, the Federation entered "the new world of teacher bargaining" as 75 certified local unions serving as bargaining agents for teachers in the public system considered future relations with boards and government under a scheme which introduced full-scope bargaining, duty to bargain in good faith, access to unfair labour practice, and the right to strike; at the expense of compulsory arbitration, bargaining timelines, employment rights enshrined in law, and administrator-membership in the BCTF.[9] It also effected under Sections 5, 6, 7, and 10 of the Teaching Profession Act the election of 15 College of Teachers Council members solidly recommended as BCTF candidates.[10] "Our foundations are intact," declared BCTF President McMurphy. "With this has come a sense of rejuvenation and change...a sense of a fresh start, a new beginning."[11]

Consensus

If the research group had harboured any doubts over the pervasiveness of the political climate and abrasiveness of political events most closely preceding McMurphy's message, these were summarily removed by a review in May 1988 of briefs received to date. By then, 78 briefs addressed the question of politics in education: 54 referred to Bill 20; at least 16 dealt in part with teacher strikes and work-to-rule action; over 30 examined the prerogatives of school boards relative to other jurisdictions—government in particular; 26 discussed privatization; another 19 considered administrative decentralization; and as many again dealt with the Passport to Excellence scheme—in all, 242 briefs touching on political events said to affect the quality of provincial education.

The two thousand and more briefs filed with the Commission are now in the public domain and may be consulted in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Representative excerpts of government, business, public employee, university, superintendent, teacher, and board authorship will serve to show, however, how all-embracing was the con-

cern among these constituencies to replace political confrontation in provincial educational affairs such as we have described with a new era of cooperation and consultation in the best interests of our children.

Offering its brief relatively early in the sequence received, the Ministry of Education declined to "touch on current issues, practices or policies," opting instead to delineate the challenge and envisage an educational system worthy of meeting it. At the outset, though, it spoke "of an education system...its components and the connections between them," that is, of learners, parents teachers, schools, and school managers, and of the "ethical, technical and political changes" that affect their interdependence. In its comments on collective rights, the B.C. Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees added a perspective on "the recent history of continuing bitterness and confrontation in our provincial education system...." Though more restrained, university education faculties made much the same point. The University of British Columbia spoke of "a climate of cooperation among all those involved" as paramount in making "responsible educational decisions." Simon Fraser University urged "new forms of collaborative efforts," supportive government "regardless of...political affiliation," and "the respect and support of the community, particularly through its elected representatives." And in its preamble, the University of Victoria recognized the "changed context of education in British Columbia in the light of recent economic and political developments." With contrasting directness, the Association of British Columbia School Superintendents called for "a climate of stability and co-operation to permit responsible long range planning," adding that in the matter of "maintaining a functional system of checks and balances" within the educational system, "responsibility...begins with the provincial government, which must exercise this responsibility with an exceedingly high degree of concern and nurturing sensitivity."

Whereas the message of collaboration emerged from the above briefs with varying degrees of emphasis, it was stated with consistent and compelling forcefulness in briefs from local teacher associations and the BCTF itself. Maple Ridge Teachers' Association, for instance, expressed regret over alleged government avoidance of direct consultation; impatience "with this Government's definition of input"; and reluctance "to add any credibility to the process that it uses in this regard." The Shuswap Teachers' Association alluded to education wars, teacher demoralization, and ministerial teacher-bashing, introductory to its recommendation that "a very real attempt be made to defuse the apparent power struggle between the government and the BCTF by ensuring that full and meaningful consultation takes place on a continuing basis." And in its "attempt to influence...political process," the Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association contended that shortfalls in provincial education stemmed from "a lack of provincial political commitment to providing the resources and leadership necessary to allow it to do so." Dozens of other teacher association briefs voiced similar sentiments. Many of the latter were generalized in the British Columbia Teachers' Federation presentation which understandably enjoyed a high degree of local association support throughout the province. A major theme of this document was "the imperative that the full and voluntary commitment of teachers to their students demands their personal and organizational involvement in any plans for change." This basic insistence on professional recognition called for "consultation on all matters of educational policy and practice through professional representatives...chosen by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation provincially, and locally by the local association of the BCTF...." Lack of such consultation with all stakeholders in education, the brief argued, had resulted heretofore in a "style of interposition of major new ideas and processes that bedevils policy and the governance structures that go with it." What, therefore, was crucial to long-term stability on the provincial education scene was universal resolve that "all those with a stake in public education participate in determining education policy..." and that trustees, parents, labour, business and community leaders join teachers in helping government form education policy.

No less forceful were briefs representing trustee concerns over the welfare of education under conditions of political confrontation. School District 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) did not envy the Commission's task "in a time of reduced resources and imposed political change...." School District 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin) called for greater effort "to enhance public support for and faith in the public education system," a joint commitment to be shared by districts, their professional employees, and the Ministry of Education. School District 36 (Surrey) detected that "at times, it appears as if government does not have confidence in, or trust locally elected school boards," and, mentioning "a 'big brother' attitude that has not been particularly functional in the delivery of educational services," appealed for governmental continuity in policy and direction "which would serve to engender confidence in government by those who develop local policy, administer the policy and teach children." In its presentation "Excellence Through Co-operation," School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) deplored "ad hoc responses to political pressure in our programming, such as...Consumer Education, the Family Life Program, graduation requirements in Science and Technology, and Bills 19 and 20," adding that "if rules are constantly altered and surprise mandates issued, it is very difficult for the Board." Though it faulted no particular group, School District 89 (Shuswap) declared that "the educational environ-

ment during the past several years has been characterized by sharp divisions, bitter disputes and confrontations," and urged the Commission to propose provisions for sharing differing views, in an "atmosphere of harmony and good will," in a manner unconstrained "by existing governmental, institutional, or educational structures." "There has been a trend," said School District 39 (Vancouver) by Ministers of Education toward lack of policy continuity "due to their short time in office" as well as "a tendency to impose personal views without establishing whether these views were widely held." In the meantime, "jurisdictional disputes between local boards and various ministers have been common and this has led to reduced morale among trustees, teachers, and support staff and an erosion of public confidence in the education system."

The foregoing judgements are representative. Numerous other school districts articulated similar opinions. Finally, in a submission based on belief in and practice of unusually broad consultation, the British Columbia School Trustees Association captured in a memorable statement the essence of its members' views on the question. "Over the past six years," the brief noted, "the school system has been greatly stressed by conflict and confrontation. Teacher strikes, taxpayer revolts, school board removals and centralizing of governance and policy-making in the provincial government are symptoms of a governance and decision-making process that has been changed and which operates quite differently from the past. It serves no purpose to analyse and lay blame. Let it be enough that we agree that *it must stop* and that we direct our energies to rebuilding the system."

As we said before, given the difficulty of its task, it has been the Commission's good fortune to receive so many briefs representing such a rich sample of constituencies and multiplicity of educational insights. If a unique theme unites them all, however, it must surely be the hurtful effect sustained political confrontation in education can have upon the lives of children. Before leaping to conclusions, though, it seems appropriate to point out that in effect, two issues—politics and consultation—are really at stake here. On the one hand, it is sometimes assumed that politics have no place in education. We believe that, historically, politics have indeed played a major role in shaping the course of schooling. Thus, we do not see political conflict in itself as necessarily dysfunctional: normally it reflects lay control of schools and speaks to the differences of opinion and value that characterize a diverse, rich, and democratic society. We emphasize, nevertheless, that in recent decades, preoccupation with political conflict has exerted a paralyzing grip on provincial educational affairs, pitting labour and management, government and teachers, administrators and their staffs, one against the other to the detriment of all and especially to the disadvantage of school children. Consultation, on the other hand, we see not as *distinct* from politics but rather as the normal vehicle for *resolving* political and other differences concerning education. We see also the importance of consultation as the routine precursor of legislative initiatives and the means of providing legislative leaders and senior educational officials with the social and educational intelligence required for sound policy formulation. Accordingly, we seek a political process illuminated by consultation. Identification of legitimate educational issues, sensitivity to rational educational priorities, establishment of dependable short-, medium-, and long-range anticipatory planning and, above all, nurture of an educational climate of sense and civility constitute, we think, immediate and principal aims of such a process. Our children deserve no less.

Suggestions

In light of the above discussion, we conclude that improving the climate of educational politics is of incomparable importance to all British Columbians. As a means of initiating such improvement, we suggest:

1. that the Minister of Education establish an advisory body on provincial educational policy composed of elected officials, teachers, parents, representatives of labour, management, the arts, and the professions, charged with reviewing and proposing changes to government educational policy;

2. that in consultation with the advisory body on provincial education, the Minister of Education develop and publicize a statement of educational purpose for the provincial schools, and that this mandate for educational practice be implemented in a cooperative and consultative manner.

References

1. For graphic representation of negative changes in gross domestic product, retail sales, fixed capital investment, and labour market trends circa 1982, see Province of British Columbia, *Financial and Economic Review*, 47th Edition, September 1987 (Victoria: Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations, 1987), pp 3-12.

2. For a thorough analysis of this aspect of the topic, see Jerry Bruce Roald, *Pursuit of Status: Professionalism, Unionism, and Militancy in the Evolution of Canadian Teachers Organizations, 1915-1955* (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Education, UBC, 1970).

3. For a fuller description of these events, see BCTF, *Members' Guide to the BCTF 1981/82* (Vancouver: B.C. Teachers' Federation, 1981), pp 87-93.

4. See Jean Barman, "Transfer, Imposition or Consensus? The Emergence of Educational Structures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," in Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones (eds.), *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1986), pp 242, 245, and *passim*.

5. Thomas Fleming records that "in the twenty-four-year period from 1947 to 1971, there had been a thirty-five-fold increase in educational funding. In 1971, expenditures on education equalled the entire provincial budget only nine years earlier. They now equalled nearly 29% of total provincial expenditures compared to only 15% twenty years before. The meaning of this growth was not overlooked by the Economic Council of Canada who forecast in 1970 that, if the cost of education and health services continued to rise at the rate they had in the previous five years, they would absorb Canada's entire gross national product by the year 2000." See his "In the Imperial Age and After: Patterns of British Columbia School Leadership and the Institution of the Superintendency 1849-1988," a paper delivered at the Association of British Columbia School Superintendents Conference, Vancouver, March 8, 1988, p.26.

6. *Ibid.*, pp 30-31.

7. Cited in Charles S. Ungerleider, "The Social and Political Context of Educational Change in British Columbia," a paper presented to the Sociology of Education Thirteenth Annual Conference, Pacific Grove, California, February 1985, p.3.

8. *Ibid.*, pp 3-4.

9. See Mavis Lowry, "The New World of Teacher Bargaining," *Teacher*, March 1988, p.4. For Federation reportage of the above summary of events, see *BCTF Newsletter*, Volume 27, Numbers 1-5, *passim*.

10. For an illuminating interview by Nancy Hinds with Chairperson Bill Broadly and Vice-Chairperson Debbie Gregg, see "The College of Teachers," *Teacher*, March 1988, pp 8-9 and 12.

11. "Message from the President," *Teacher*, March 1988, p.3.

7. Public Support for Non-Public Schooling

During the course of the Commission inquiry no single educational issue captured our attention with such compulsion as the debate over public as opposed to non-public schooling and its implication for British Columbians. At times the argument emerged as a consequence of perceived parental rights. At other junctures it hinged upon assumed state prerogatives or responsibilities. Upon occasion, a discussion of equal educational opportunity led to a dispute about élitism versus the common good. Now and again controversy erupted over the limits of parental choice respecting what children ought to learn, where, and under what regulation. Listening to such exchanges, we were impressed with the way forebearance tempered disagreement. Whenever the matter of public funding for non-public schools arose, though, opinion hardened and resolution stiffened. In simple terms, those disapproving of such disbursements dared those who approved of them to justify their case.

Such disputes are scarcely new to British Columbia. Because they were colonial institutions reflecting European educational custom, early schools in British Columbia did not distinguish the public from the non-public sector with any great precision. For example, by 1849, an Anglican and a Roman Catholic clergyman had each established a school at Fort Victoria. According to the administrative assumptions of the day, these clerics were responsible to James Douglas, Chief Factor of the post, as well as to their respective bishops. Moreover, each school received funds from the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), from church authorities, and from fee-paying parents. In 1849, Vancouver Island became a crown colony and in 1851 Douglas was appointed Governor. By 1855 he had provided colonial funds in support of schools at Victoria, Craigflower, and Nanaimo. Between 1856 and 1867, various other private or religious schools opened on the Island. Meantime, on the mainland, which had assumed crown colony status in 1858, schools sprang up at Fort Simpson, Sapperton, New Westminster, Mission City, Hope, Yale, and Douglas, run by Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, or private secular interests.

Variety characterized their operation. Some received government support, some HBC aid. Some were the creation of religious sects. Others were private ventures. The old Sapperton school exemplifies an instance of an early educational institution whose administrative lines were blurred by historical circumstances. Run by an Anglican clergyman for children of the Royal Engineers, it received funds from the Crown Colony of British Columbia, from the British War Office, and from parents; and its teacher, the Reverend John Sheepshanks, answered to these three constituencies as well as to his Church of England superiors.

Discovery of gold on the Fraser gravel bars in 1857, and at Keithly Creek and vicinity in 1860, prompted rapid growth in provincial communications and indirectly, led to the emergence of new faces that would soon shape provincial schooling. Wagon roads and steamer routes burgeoned as did two influential newspapers—Amor De Cosmos' *British Colonist* and John Robson's *British Columbian*. During these economically spirited times, colonial leaders, none more forceful than democratically minded editors De Cosmos and Robson, pressed for regulations to tidy up an irregular pattern of school services. The outcome was legislation in 1865 and 1869 heralding the Free Public Schools Act of 1872. Throughout this formative period, De Cosmos campaigned against state aid for religious institutions and for free, non-sectarian common schooling which he sensed was the will of many *Colonist* subscribers. *Columbian* editor Robson did likewise, his forthright editorials fueling a New Westminster resolution that only non-sectarian, non-denominational schools "should be supported in whole or in part by public money."

The 1872 Act embodied the two principal tenets of the De Cosmos/Robson argument—that public schools ought to enjoy government funding and that private and especially sectarian schools ought not—the primary purpose of public schooling being to guarantee "every child in the Province such knowledge as will fit him to become a useful and intelligent citizen in after years." In its first draft, the Act did not specify compulsory attendance. Nor did it question the legitimacy or, for that matter, the desirability of non-public schools. To be sure, as Downey points out, for several decades after its enactment, "the public school system grew and developed, largely unchallenged by supporters of other forms of education." Just the same, parallel with this growth was the multiplication of denominational and private non-denominational schools, which by 1978 numbered upward of 180. Over this time, supporters of non-public school-

ing increasingly came to believe that, because they had elected to send their children to schools delivering perceived educational benefits public schools could not or would not provide, they were obliged to endure financial discrimination.

Documenting each episode leading from the initial provincial recognition of the need for public assistance to non-public schools, through to the evolution of present policies outlined first in the 1977 *Independent Schools Support Act*, is a task beyond the scope of this inquiry. Briefly summarized, eventual government action stemmed from repeated contentions on the part of the non-public sector that double payment of both taxes and fees for educational services was unjust, and that choice of alternative forms of schooling constituted a democratic right benefiting society as a whole—contentions understandably articulated in the content of provincial elections. In 1951, early signs of change were made manifest when children in independent schools received the right to free textbooks. The same year, also, the provincial government assumed responsibility for dental and health services which Catholic Health Services Offices felt they could no longer supply to Catholic parochial schools. Bus service for non-public school children was made possible by enabling legislation during the 1950s, though not all public school boards cooperated in sharing transportation facilities.

The trend toward greater recognition of non-public school needs was also made evident in other ways. Private school properties were excused municipal taxation in 1957. In 1967 Notre Dame University—a Catholic institution—received public funding. And in 1972, private schools were granted permission to approach Ottawa directly to seek federal support for bilingual schooling. In Downey's view, subsequent formation of the Federation of Independent School Associations, the Social Credit Party's 1975 election platform, an NDP opposition divided on the issue, strong leadership on the part of Education Minister Patrick McGeer, and the receptive mood of an increasingly pluralistic society, when taken together, created a social climate which bolstered passage on March 30, 1977 of *Bill 33*, now referred to as the *School Support (Independent) Act*.

Under its provisions, to enjoy government subsidy, a Group 1 school must guarantee a socially unprejudiced educational program conducted in adequate facilities. Beyond these provisions, a Group 2 school must add a curriculum which meets public school time requirements; it must also participate in provincial learning assessments and other recognized testing procedures, ensure that all teachers are certified or moving toward certification, and agree to external evaluation. In meeting such provisions, a Group 1 school is entitled to a grant calculated at 10% of the per student operating cost of the public school district in which it is located multiplied by its audited attendance figure. A Group 2 school qualifies for a grant of 35% calculated on the same basis.

As this research team quickly discovered, despite the School Support (Independent) Act's eleven consecutive years of operation, debate over its propriety continues. Those who endorse it sometimes state their case empirically as loss of confidence in public schools, which, they say, no longer set the academic, disciplinary, cultural, or spiritual standards they believe should characterize their children's education, a perception which Barman observes "is held not only by some established British Columbian families but also by recent immigrants of financial means coming from areas of the world where non-public schooling is assumed to be superior." Such supporters of the non-public sector schools sometimes also justify their choice with reference to precedents which illustrate that Italy and Greece are "the only countries in the European Community that do not support at least part of their private education sectors from public funds"; that in Australia, funded non-governmental schools make up some 25% of the total number of schools nationally; that upwards of 25% of school entrants for advanced-level examinations in England and Wales in the early 1980s came from funded non-government schools; or that in Holland, a long-standing voucher system has served "diverse tastes in education. . .in a political setting where no group was in a position to impose its preferred kind on the others."

In addition, supporters of the *School Support (Independent) Act* explain their position ideologically. Such argument holds that parents "have a prior right to select the kind of education they believe appropriate for their children," and that it is up to the state to furnish tangible assistance in making this choice possible. Choice is thereby understood as enhancing parental participation in children's schooling, and the consequence of such engagement is viewed as beneficial to public and non-public sectors alike. Beyond this expectation, parental choice is also considered to be an absolute good which helps promote justice for all, and which enriches the general public good in a democratic society. Additional lines of this argument hold that no system or service that is entirely monopolistic in character will remain motivated to provide the kinds of educational experiences a pluralistic society demands. In standardizing services, advocates of educational choice contend, public schooling cannot serve diverse sectors of public taste.

As those who favour public aid to non-public schools see such assistance as contributing to the social good and reflecting the diversity which, in fact, exists, those opposed to government support of the non-public sector schools consider the practice to be socially divisive. At a fundamental level, they question why taxes should be used in apparent support of school facilities operated by particular religious denominations. In more complex terms, they see such support as detrimental to public education by first reducing overall financial support to the public schools and then, partially funding the non-public at the expense of the public sector.

Opponents of support for non-public schools insist, too, that equality of educational opportunity is not served by such a provincial policy in that, as availability of choice in this sector increases, overall equality of opportunity decreases because the non-public sector is not "open and free" but self-selective, to some degree. They further declare that income, language, social class, gender, religion, and other social factors may also restrict real parental choice in non-public schooling. They acknowledge that socially, as well as politically, education is the central legitimator for individual and state alike, and that the public good is enshrined in educational experiences. However, they maintain, too, that parental rights in this respect should not supercede those of the state in providing for the welfare and education of the young. Furthermore, they view the exit of parents from the public system as detrimental to the public good in that, with such departures, parents also take their interest and support of the public system with them.

Some major interest groups in public education argued strongly against provincial support of non-public schools. The British Columbia Teachers' Federation, for example, recommended that public funds be used only for public and not for private schools. The British Columbia School Trustees Association said that the provincial government should phase out funding for independent schools. The Association of British Columbia School Superintendents saw some trends toward alternative schooling as divisive and urged government to ensure a strong and properly funded public school system. Other concerned groups adopted similar positions. The Canadian Union of Public Employees, for instance, declared private schools for the "wealthy and privileged" should not be subsidized with public dollars. The Vancouver Secondary Teachers Association recommended that no educational services be privatized. And many individuals associated either professionally or, through their own or other's children, with provincial public schools, saw funding for non-public education as a distinct financial threat to the welfare of the public school system.

In its attempt to test out these contradictory opinions this research team wishes first to dispel possible misunderstanding that may arise from positions or cases that are overstated. For a start, loss of faith in public schooling as a justification for subscribing to the non-public sector is a matter of personal judgement. In this regard, we have, of course, heard individuals express with singular emphasis their dissatisfaction with the public system. Conversely, our access to scores of schools, hundreds of teachers, and thousands of students in the public sector convinces us that the public system is, in many ways, responding with professional commitment to its important and, at times, difficult tasks.Indeed, to imply that public schooling is in the chaotic state some imagine is to do public schooling a monumental disservice. Second, we also detect abroad the misleading assumption that non-public is synonymous with élite. Granted, a dozen or so British Columbia independent schools emulate the curricular interests and sumptuary laws of certain old world institutions. Nevertheless, by far the greater number of the funded non-public schools—Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, Seventh Day Adventist, Jewish, Mennonite, Sikh, Lutheran, and Fundamentalist Christian schools, as well as the secular Waldorf and Montessori schools—exercise considerable reach with respect to the social origins of the girls and boys they teach. In the case of these schools, and they are a majority, the term élite is unquestionably inappropriate. In addition, it should also be noted that far from being in any statistical sense a "threat" to the public school system, these non-public schools with their approximately 30,000 students presently make up a modest 6.5% of all the elementary and secondary-aged pupils enrolled in the province. Third, despite the often-repeated impression that funds made available in aid of non-public schools must perforce be extracted from funds otherwise allotted to public schools to the detriment of the latter jurisdiction, we hold such a supposition to be a limited oversimplification of the particularly complex, though distinctly functional, formula governing school finance. In this regard, it should be noted that this research team could find no evidence to suggest that the partial levels of support now awarded to certain non-public schools which meet certain provincial criteria was provided out of funds earmarked for the public sector. However, this perception remains lodged in the minds of many.

Turning now to some general conclusions regarding the use of public funds for non-public schooling, this research team notes that denominational and private schools have been part of provincial educational history since earliest colonial times. Some, enjoying the continuous momentum of a St. Ann's Academy or a Crofton House, can trace their origins back to the 19th century. Others, including dozens of private venture institutions, once intended to meet par-

ticular social needs, like hundreds of earlier rural public schools, have resounded for a time with the voices of children, fallen silent, and vanished. Yet others, born of more recent times, today join their longer-standing counterparts, as well as the public schools, in contributing to the social capital of the province by educating a variety of workers, leaders, and citizens steeped in the aesthetic, spiritual, and humanitarian affairs of daily life. On-site visits, public hearings, and thoughtful briefs together have satisfied this research team that a sense of mission, commitment, and competency exists within the non-public sector which, despite minimal resources in some instances, serve the best interests of children, their parents, and society as a whole. We therefore deem it proper that non-public schools should continue to receive provincial financial assistance. Such aid we believe to be a normal, tangible manifestation of the freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. To assume otherwise would be to deny accommodation of social diversity and multiculturalism, the recognition of individual differences, and the right of parents to participate in educational choice—all principles which remain fundamental parts of the democratic system we hold dear.

While endorsing provincial aid for non-public schools, however, the research team acknowledges the reality of several major concerns raised during its inquiry. One of these involves the delicate balance between government aid and government intervention or, turned around, between subsidy and institutional independence. Another is that only non-public schools thus subsidized come under government scrutiny. Indeed, as certain observers point out, very little is known about the relatively few non-public schools operating outside the Federation of Independent School Association's organizational framework, a lack of evidence some consider compromising to the welfare of the 3-4,000 pupils attending such schools. Yet another often heard anxiety already alluded to is the fear of future social balkanization through non-public schools whose limited contact with each other and with the public school system, together with admission policies restrictive as to religious belief, church membership, academic potential, ability to pay, and even (de facto) ethnicity and race, are in danger of cancelling out those efforts toward social cohesion correctly assumed to constitute the foundation of public schooling.

Suggestions

The research team respectfully draws the attention of all British Columbians to the issues examined in this section. In addition, it suggests:

1. that in conjunction with data collected for the purpose of compiling the Ministry's annual report, the Minister of Education seek to secure from non-public schools *not* in receipt of government funding the statistical and other data regarding their operation to allow for a full annual picture of schooling in British Columbia from Kindergarten to Grade 12;

2. that the Minister of Education explore ways and means of ensuring that non-public schools operating outside the jurisdiction of the *School Support (Independent) Act* nonetheless carry out their work in a manner consistent with relevant sections of the *School Act*;

3. that the Ministry of Education review admission policies and practices throughout all provincial schools, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, to determine to what extent British Columbia's children are well served and to initiate action in the event that findings are inconsistent with the requirements of a free and open society.

8. French Immersion in British Columbia, 1988-2000

Many times during its work, this research group was reminded of the multicultural nature of British Columbia schools and the need to acknowledge pluralism in all aspects of their daily operation. For the most part, we witnessed such acknowledgement in the form of a respectful atmosphere permeating the school's pedagogical and social activities. Upon occasion, though, we were struck by the administrative consequences of policy decisions touching particular facets of multiculturalism. The French Immersion program was an arresting case in point.

In September, 1978, there were 635 children enrolled at the French Immersion kindergarten level, 1,407 in the elementary grades, and 212 in the secondary grades.* By June, 1988, these figures stood at 3,270, 15,505, and 4,488 respectively, representing corresponding relative increases of 515%, 1,100%, and 2,100%! these 1988 figures reflect an 8.4% participation rate at the kindergarten entry point. Were this rate to continue, the Grade 6 entry rate to stabilize at the average of its 1984-85 and 1987-88 levels, and the Kindergarten-to-Grade 1 retention rate to remain steady at the 1984-87 average, the year 2000 would by this conservative estimate achieve the following French Immersion enrolment; kindergarten, 3,579; elementary grades, 25,577; secondary grades, 13,894.

Given the French Immersion program's continuing appeal in British Columbia, Ontario, and the prairie provinces as well as its high retention rates (in this province, 95% in elementary grades and 85% in secondary grades), however, there is reason to believe that modest increases at the B.C. kindergarten participation level would not be out of line as a second model for planning which, in comparison with the status quo assumptions just illustrated, would provide a range of future possibilities. For instance, assuming a 0.5% per year increase in the kindergarten participation rate over five years.; a reduction to 0.2% per year for five additional years; and zero change beyond, the French Immersion enrolment picture circe 2000 would appear as follows: kindergarten, 5,071; elementary grades, 35,243; secondary grades, 16,685. The sensitivity of the numerical relationships is apparent. That is, a modest increase in kindergarten participation triggers a rapidly escalating enrolment throughout.

Implications for the recruitment, training, and deployment of French Immersion teaching staff merit serious consideration. By the year 2000, the steady participation rate of 8.4% at the kindergarten entry point would call for French Immersion teachers *additional* to 1987 strength as follows: kindergarten, 6; elementary grades, 403; secondary grades, 147. Were the "modest increase" assumptions accepted, these figures would approximate 36, 790, and 184 respectively. In other words, a reasonable estimate suggests that somewhere between 556 and 1,010 additional teachers could be required above the 1987 level for B.C. French Immersion alone. This estimate is based on an average class of 25 and on an assumption that secondary pupils would take an average one-third of their courses in French.

* Data from C.Curtois, *French Immersion in British Columbia 1988-2000* (White Rock, B.C.: Baragar Enterprises, 1988).